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The SABLE LORCHA

By HORACE HAZELTINE

THEODORE HAMILTON 1919.

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GENTLE JABS.

Proofreaders are practical type-righters.

The softer the road the harder it is to travel.

Often the apology is worse than the offense.

An unbridled passion sometimes leads to the halter.

It's always advisable for a poor liar to tell the truth.

It is easy to get rich after you have the first million.

Love makes a young man sober and an old man giddy.

Busy men are seldom afflicted with fits of melancholy.

A little learning is a dangerous thing for the amateur skater.

Any man who does you an ill turn will never forgive you for it.

Many a man who knows what is right lacks the courage to do it.

A bird in the hand is permissible if you have no knife and fork.

It is better to be up with the lark than down with the measles.

There is no rhyme for silver, but it jingles with gold very nicely.

Amateur photographers are willing to take anything except advice.

A rose by any other name would be just as expensive in midwinter.

Political fences are usually of the old-fashioned stake and rider pattern.

Many a man works overtime trying to convince himself that he is honest.

The man who shovels snow never encroaches on his neighbor's premises.

Introducing a happy man to a pessimist is like shaking a red rag at a bull.

Intuition is what some people claim to have when they succeed in making a good guess.

The man who considers his own faults has but little to say concerning the faults of others.

The good business man and the business man who is good are not necessarily synonymous.

Perhaps all things come to him who waits, but there are many things not worth waiting for.

A man carries domestic economy to extremes when he stops the clock at night to save time.

Many a deluded man who thinks he is marrying a woman discovers later that the woman married him.

Nothing is more edifying to some people than to see a bowlegged man chasing his hat in a windstorm.

And some church members seem to think it is up to the minister to make good for the entire congregation.

Fun at the Class Spread

A Story for Ledger Boys and Girls

"ARE we all here?" asked Dolly Deacon, the president of the Alpha Zeta society, as she looked around at the girls who had quietly gathered in an upper room of the Bayview high school one Thursday afternoon.

"Yes, yes, we are all here," cried the girls. "Hurry up and begin, Dolly."

So Dolly took her place at the head of the long school table and rapped sharply.

"This society will please come to order," she said. "Susan, you must stop such skylarking. Those horrid boys will hear us and then our trouble getting to this quiet place will go for nothing."

"Well," said Florence, "we came to talk about the spread. I move we have it tomorrow."

"I make a motion," said Susan, "we have it today. I'm hungry."

"That is impossible!" cried Dolly. "We haven't the good things today. I second the motion that we have it tomorrow afternoon, at 3 o'clock, in this room. All those in favor please say aye—motion's carried. Now we'll have to decide what we are going to bring."

The girls were so busy with their plans for the spread that they did not hear the door of the room next to them open softly and the four boys they were trying so hard to avoid steal softly in and take their places at the keyhole of the door that connected the two rooms. Quite unconscious of their auditors, the girls went on with their plans.

"Well, if it's tomorrow," said Jessie, "I won't be able to bring anything but cake. If it were a day or two later——"

"I was going to bring cake," said Dolly.

"I've got a lovely cream cake," cried Susan.

"And I have a perfectly delicious chocolate layer," added Florence.

"Well, if four of us bring cake," said Dolly, "we won't have anything very substantial. Edith, what have you got?"

"I did have marble cake," answered Edith, "but if you wish I will bring sandwiches and pickles."

"Pickles! Good!" cried Susan.

"It's all settled," said Dolly. "Now we will arrange when to meet. Those boys mustn't see us or they will spoil the whole thing."

And there were those boys hiding in the next room all the time! How they did grin and poke each other when they heard Dolly's remark!

"Well, girls," said Edith, putting on her hat, "you can arrange things and Florence must let me know. I must get the meat for the sandwiches before the store closes, and the pickles."

"I think we'd better leave our provisions in the janitor's room until school is out, then we can come in here," said Dolly.

"That will be fine. No one will suspect," cried Susan.

At that moment Edith, who had discovered the boys on her way out, came softly to the door and beckoned so imperatively that the girls left the table and came out to see what she wanted.

"Wonder what scared them?" said Ben to the boys in the next room. "Say, we won't do anything to that layout in Abijah's kitchen tomorrow."

"Um-m-m!" murmured Fred. "Four kinds of cake!"

"And sandwiches," added Andrew blissfully.

"And pickles," cried Herbert, mimicing Susan in a shrill voice. "Don't forget the pickles!"

"We'll eat up all the stuff," cried Ben, "and then leave our marks—Sigma Alpha—on the plates. What do you say?"

"Good!" cried Herbert. "Let's go out and watch the football team practice," and off they went.

The next day while Fred was floating over the daintily spread table, he suddenly heard footsteps coming and had just time to dive underneath it when Abijah, the colored janitor, came into the room wearing a broad grin and carrying a basket.

"Mah sakes," said Abijah, "but dem young misses goin' to hab a fine suppah. Ah wish Abijah c'd hab some of dis." He sighed as he took out a large cake and placed it on the table. "Clar to goodness," he cried, when the basket was nearly empty. "Ah forgot that pot ob tea Ah was goin' to contribet. Pretty dry eatin' nuffin' but cake an' sandwiches."

And he went out leaving the keys on the table. No sooner was he gone than Fred crawled from his hiding place, seized the keys, unlocked the door between the rooms and returned the keys. Then he bolted into the next room, closed the door and put a chair against it. In a moment Abijah came back with a pot of tea which he placed at the head of the table. He then drew up the chairs, picked up his keys and left the room, smiling broadly.

"Come on quick. The coast is clear. They're down in the kitchen yet. Let's mix in and clear the whole table out," cried Fred, as he rushed in at the head of the boys.

"Ah, a cup of tea for me first of all. Then the cake," said Ben.

"Here goes for the cake first," cried Herbert.

"Oh, there's more cake," said Andrew as he seized one.

"Don't forget the pickles!" cried Fred.

"Well, here's success to the Sigma Alpha!" shouted Ben. And he took a large drink of tea. Then, to the astonishment of the others he suddenly threw down his handkerchief and made a wry face. "Ugh—oh—ugh!" he cried.

"What's the matter?" asked Herbert.

"Abijah spilled the kerosene can in that tea. Ugh!"

"Well," said Andrew, laughing, "you always wanted to get everything first."

In the meantime the five girls tiptoed into the next room, followed by Abijah bearing another huge basket. The girls quietly drew out another table and set it. Susan and Florence listened at the keyhole and showed signs of laughter. The others gathered to listen.

"This pickle will take the taste out of your mouth, Ben," said Fred, and he swallowed one only to repeat Ben's wry faces.

"Sour, is it?" asked Andrew. "Girls like them sour."

"Water! Water! Ugh!" gasped Fred. "Some awful stuff in them and he seized the teacup left by Ben and took a drink before the latter could stop him. Then he uttered a shout and stamped around the room, wiping his mouth. Andrew smelled the pickle bottle.

"They're spoiled," he announced, "that's all. Here goes for the cake," and he took a large bite.

"Here goes with you," cried Herbert, and he bit into another piece.

Ben took a piece also. They chewed for a second and then removed it from their mouths.

"Soap!" cried Andrew.

"Mine's sand!" cried Herbert.

"Sold!" cried Ben. "I tell you, everything's rank! It's a game they've put up on us. How'd they find out we knew?"

"Say, it would never do to let 'em think we've been caught like this," said Herbert. "We'd never hear the last of it. Let's go and send the janitor's kids up and the girls will think they ate the things when they come," and they were just preparing to go out quietly when they heard Susan call thru the keyhole in a high voice:

"Don't forget the pickles!"

They stopped and started for the door. They rushed thru and confronted the girls, who were laughing loudly.

Then Dolly, pointing at Andrew, "Kerosene!"

Then said Florence to Ben: "Soap! Nice brown washerwoman's soap!"

And Jessie said to Herbert: "Sand! Nice, clean, white sand!"

And Susan said to Fred: "Don't forget the pickles! Castor oil!"

"I own up," confessed Edith; "it was I. Now, I'll atone for it. Girls, you've had your revenge. Now, I move we heap coals of fire on the boys' heads by asking them to have a real nice feast and then we will tell them all about how we made the different things."

"Yes," said Fred, "I want to get this taste out of my mouth. Give me some pickles without oil!"

"I want a cup of real tea," said Ben.

"A nice piece of chocolate layer I want, and no soap, please," said Andrew.

"And some cream cake without sand," added Herbert.

Then all the boys and girls sat down at the table and had a jolly feast.

Bright Eyes.

A HAWK can see a bird on a piece of soil almost the same color at twenty times the distance at which a man or a dog could see the bird; a kite soaring out of sight will pounce upon lizards and mice on the ground and the distance at which vultures and eagles can distinguish their prey is almost beyond belief. Darwin's discoveries and some recent investigations seem to prove that birds of prey have a somewhat limited power of smell. Their acute sight seems rather to account for their success, for they never sniff at anything, but dart straight at the object they want.

The Wrong Direction.

A TEACHER was explaining to her class that if one wished to do anything well, one had to begin at the bottom, when a voice from the back interrupted her.

"How about swimming, teacher?"

About Right.

SCHOOLMASTER—"Robert, here is an example in subtraction. Seven boys went down to the pond to bathe, but two of them had been told not to go into the water. Now, how many went in?"

Robert—"Seven, sir."

LOVE PROBLEMS.

SOLDIER'S WIFE: You are living with your husband's parents, and when your husband was home from camp on a thirty-day furlough he did not act as well towards you as he did when you were first married. You are expecting him home soon and want to know whether or not you should continue to live with his parents as they asked you to. Not unless you cannot help it. It is always best for young people to live alone, especially for the first few years after marriage.

A READER: You are a young girl soon out of your teens. You are deeply in love with a young man five years your senior. He says he loves you and wishes to marry you. You want to know how you can tell whether or not he means what he says. Your parents are not very kind to you and restrict all your actions. You want to know if it would be best for you to marry, stay at home or run away? My dear girl, if a man declares his love and asks you to marry him, I cannot see why you should doubt him, unless he is known as a flirt. Considering the circumstances, I should think you would hasten your marriage.

CARRIE J.: You want a remedy for head lice. Soak the hair thoroly in kerosene, and then wash with hot water and plenty of soap.

MAZIE: You are 29 and the mother of two small boys. Your husband is not true to you and, in spite of his promises, does nothing to reform. You married him to spite your parents and get a home of your own. You can't stand his treatment any longer and are thinking of making your own way. Yours is certainly a strange reason for marriage. Under the circumstances, you could scarcely expect more than you are getting. Yes, the best thing to do is to leave and earn your own way.

WORRIED WOMAN: You are a married woman with two children, and love your husband, but cannot understand his parents. You rent from them, and they are very exacting. They never pay your husband for helping them out with their farm work, and they always demand pay when helping him with his. They are much better to their other children than they are to you or your husband. You wonder if it would be a good plan to move away from there. No. Just stay and fight it out. Your husband should demand pay for what he does for them, since they want pay for their work, or else he should refuse to donate his time, which he really could use to better advantage on his own farm.

SUWANEE BLONDE: You are now 23. About six years ago you went with a boy whose ways did not suit your parents and you dropped him. He left town and some time ago came back with a wife. Since then, they have separated. You love him, and he says he cares for you, but you will not let him know that you care until he has gotten a divorce. You told him that you could not have anything to do with him until he did. Your parents do not care for him because he is poor. You know he is a good workman, but inclined to be lazy. Nobody knows why he and his wife separated or whether they will be divorced. Don't bother about him at all. From what you say, it seems to have been his fault. There are plenty of other young men, and you are still young.

BROKEN-HEARTED WIFE: You are 27 and your husband is the same age. He is good to you, but at times he is untrue and tho he promises to reform, he keeps up his old tactics. You have no children, but are raising two children of your dead sister. You do not feel able to go out and earn your own living. Your husband can be made to support you if you separate from him. Threaten this and carry it out if he doesn't reform as he promises.

PERPLEXED: You are 17 and corresponding with a cousin, unknown to your parents and against their wishes. You want to know what you should do, since they do not want you to marry this boy. They are right. First of all you are too young to marry and know what you are about. Secondly, it is never a good thing to marry a cousin. In fact, some States have laws against it.

E. K.: You are a boy of 19 and are going with a girl of 20. In her letters she says she loves you, but her actions when with you, either alone or in company do not indicate this. You love her and want to know what to say to her when asking her if she really cares for you. You also want to know how long before the wedding a girl wears an engagement ring. Just ask her plainly, "Do you love me well enough to marry me?" A ring is worn as soon as the engagement is announced.

HELEN: You are 22, and a war widow. You are in love with a young man of 24. He goes about with another girl at times, tho he says he cares for me. You want to know what to do. Pretend a little indifference. Perhaps he will come to time if you do.

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CHAPTER I.

THE VANISHING PORTRAIT.

EVELYN GRAYSON, meeting me on the old Boston Post Road, between Greenwich and Stamford, gave me a message from her uncle. That is the logical beginning of this story; tho to make everything quite clear from the start it may be better to hark back a few months, to the day on which Evelyn Grayson and I first met.

Then, as now, we were each driving our own car; she, a great sixty horse-power machine, all glistening pale yellow, and I, a compact six-cylinder racer, of a dull dusty gray. But we were not on any such broad, roomy thorofare as the Boston Post Road. On the contrary we were short-cutting thru a narrow, rough lane, beset by stone walls and interrupted at intervals by a series of sharp treacherous angles.

I know I shall never forget the momentary impression I received. Out of the golden sunlight, it seemed to me, there had emerged suddenly a tableau of Queen Titania on a topaz throne—the fairest Queen Titania imagination ever conjured—and I, in my mad, panting speed was about to crash into the gauzy fabric of that dream creation and rend it with brutal, torturing onrush of relentless, hard-driven nickel steel. I take no credit to myself for what I did.

My hands acted on an impulse above and beyond all tardy mental guidance. For just a flashing instant the gray nose of my car rose before me, as in strenuous assault it mounted half way to the coping of the roadside wall. I felt my seat dart away from beneath me, was conscious of my body in swift, unsupported aerial flight, and then——

When I regained consciousness, Queen Titania was kneeling in the dust of the lane beside me—a very distressed and anxious Queen Titania, with wide, startled eyes, and quiveringly sympathetic lips—and about us were a half dozen or more country folk.

Between that meeting in mid-May and this meeting on the old Boston Post Road in mid-September, there had been others, of course; for Queen Titania, whose every-day name as I have said, was Evelyn Grayson, was the niece and ward of my nearest neighbor, Mr. Robert Cameron, a gentleman recently come to reside on what for a century and more had been known as the old Townsbury estate, extending for quite a mile along the Connecticut shore of Long Island Sound in the neighborhood of Greenwich.

The intervening four months had witnessed the gradual growth of as near an approach to intimacy between Cameron and myself as was possible considering the manner of man that Cameron was. By which statement I mean to imply naught to my neighbor's discredit. He was in all respects admirable—a gentleman of education and culture, widely traveled, of exalted ideals and noble principles to which he gave rigid adherence. But—I was about to qualify this by describing him as reserved and taciturn. I fear, tho, to give a wrong impression. He was scarcely that. There were moments, however, when he was unresponsive, and he was never demonstrative. He had more poise than any man I know. He allowed you to see just so much of him, and no more. At times he was almost stubbornly reticent. And yet, in spite of these qualities, which appeared to be cultivated rather than inherent, he gave repeated evidence of a nature at once so simple and kindly and sympathetic as to command both confidence and affection.

To the progress of my intimacy with Evelyn there had been no such temperamental impediment. She was fearlessly outspoken, with the frankness born of unspoiled innocence; barely six weeks having elapsed between her graduation from the tiny French convent of Sainte Barbe near Paris and our perilous encounter in that contracted, treacherous, yet blessed little Connecticut lane. And she possessed, moreover, a multiplicity of additional charms, both of person and disposition—charms too numerous indeed to enumerate, and far too sacred to discuss. From which it may rightly be inferred that we understood each other, Evelyn and I, and that we were already considerably beyond the state or condition of mere formal acquaintanceship.

It was no Queen Titania who now came gliding to a stand beside me on the broad, level, well-oiled highway, under a double row of arching elms. It was no gossamer fairy, but Hebe, the Goddess of Youth, with creamy skin and red lips and a lilting melody of voice:

"What ho, Sir Philip! We are well met!"

And then she told me that her Uncle Robert had telephoned for me, leaving a message with my man, bidding me come to him at my earliest leisure.

"Why not come for dinner?" she added; and her eyes gave accent to her words.

"But you?" I queried; for her car was headed in the opposite direction.

"I am going only to Noroton. I have a hamper in the tonneau for that poor O'Malley family. I shall be back in time. We dine at half-past seven, you know. You'll come?"

"Of course I'll come," I answered her. I think she must have heard more in my voice than the simple words, for her lids dropped, for just a breath, and the color flamed sudden below her lowered lasnes.

But, after all, I saw very little of her that evening. It is true that she sat on my right at table, piquantly, youthfully beautiful in the softly tinted light which filtered thru the pink and silver filigree candleshades, but the atmosphere of the dinner was tinged by a vague, unreasoning constraint as from some ominously brooding yet undefinable influence which overhung the three of us. And when the coffee was served she bade us good-night and left us, not to return.

After his niece had withdrawn, Cameron continued for a time to discuss with me topics of general and public, rather than personal, import. He spoke, I remember, of a series of articles on "The Commercial Resources of the United States," the publication of which had just begun in The Week, of which I am owner and editor; and tho I fancied at first that it might be in this connection he wished to consult me, I very soon discerned that he was merely using a statement contained therein as a text for certain views of his own on the conservation and development of the country's timber supply.

I go thus into what may seem uninteresting detail, partly that I may give a hint as to the character of Cameron's mind, but more especially to indicate how lightly he would have had me think he regarded that for which he sought me.

Meanwhile my curiosity grew keener. It was natural, I suppose, that I should fancy Evelyn involved in some way. In fact, I then attributed the depression during dinner to her knowledge of what her uncle and guardian purposed to say to me. Likewise I found in this conception the reason for her sudden and unusual desertion. Hitherto when I had dined here Evelyn had remained with us while we smoked our cigarettes, leading us at length to the music-room, where for a glad half-hour the rich melody of her youthfully sweet contralto voice mingled in pleasing harmony with her own piano accompaniment.

And while I vainly made effort to imagine wherein I might have laid myself open to the disapproval of this most punctilious of guardians—for I expected nothing less than a studiously polite reference to some shortcoming of which I had been unwittingly guilty—I momentarily lost track of my host's discourse. Emerging from my abstraction it was with a measure of relief that I heard him saying:

"I think you told me once, Clyde, that you rather prided yourself on your ability to get a line on one's character from his handwriting. That's why I telephoned for you this afternoon. I have received an anonymous letter."

He was leaning forward, a little constrainedly, his left hand gripping the arm of his chair, the fingers of his right hand toying with the stem of his gold-rimmed Bohemian glass.

"An anonymous letter!" I repeated, with a deprecatory smile. "Anonymous letters should be burned and forgotten. Surely you're not bothering about the writer?"

I wish I could put before you an exact reproduction of Cameron's face as I then saw it; those rugged outlines, the heritage of Scottish ancestry, softened and refined by a brilliant intellectuality, the sturdy chin and square jaw; the heavy underlip meeting the upper in scarcely perceptible curve; the broad, homely nose; the small, but alert, gray eyes, shining thru the round lenses of his spectacles; the high, broad, sloping, white brow and the receding order of dark brown, slightly grizzled hair. That, superficially, was the face. But I saw more than that. In the visage of one naturally brave I saw a battle waged behind a mask—a battle between courage and fear; and I saw fear win.

Then the mask became opaque once more, and Cameron, giving me smile for smile, was replying.

"There are anonymous letters and anonymous letters. Ordinarily your method is the one I should pursue. Indeed, I may say that when, about a month or so ago, I received a communication of that character, I did almost precisely what you now advise. Certainly I followed one-half of your prescription—I forgot the letter; tho, for lack of fire in the dog days, I did not burn it, but thrust it into a drawer with an accumulation of advertising circulars."

My apprehension lest Evelyn and I were personally affected had been by now quite dissipated. It was perfectly apparent to me that Cameron alone was involved; yet my anxiety was none the less eager. Already my sympathy and cooperation were enlisted. I could only hope that he had mentally exaggerated the gravity of the situation, yet my judgment of him was that his inclination would be to err in the opposite direction.

"And now something has happened to recall it to your memory?"

"Something happened very shortly after its receipt," he replied. "Something very puzzling. But in spite of that, I was inclined to treat the matter as a bit of clever chicanery, devised for the purpose, probably, of extortion. As such, I again put it from my thoughts; but today I received a second letter, and I admit I am interested. The affair has features which make it uncommonly perplexing."

I fear my imagination was sluggish. Altho, in spite of his dissemblance, I saw that he was strangely moved by these happenings, I could fancy no very terrifying concomitants of the rather commonplace facts he had narrated. For anonymous letters I had ever held scant respect. An ambushed enemy, I argued, is admittedly a coward. And so I was in danger of growing impatient.

"When the second letter came," he continued, bringing his left hand forward to join his right on the dazzling white ground of the table's damask, "I searched among the circulars for the first, and found it. I want you to see them both. The writing is very curious—I have never seen anything just like it—and the signature, if I may call it that, is still more singular. On the first letter, I took it for a blot. But on the second letter occurs the same black blur or smudge of identical outline."

Of course I thought of the Black Hand. It was the natural corollary, seeing that the newspapers had been giving us a surfeit of Black Hand threats and Black Hand outrages. But, somehow, I did not dare to voice it. To have suggested anything so ordinary to Cameron in his present mood would have been to offer him offense.

And when, at the next moment, he drew from an inner pocket of his evening coat two thin, wax-like sheets of paper and passed them to me I was glad that I had kept silence. For the letters were no rough, rude scrawls of an illiterate Mafia or Camorra. In phraseology as well as in penmanship they were impressively unique.

"If you don't mind," Cameron was saying, "you might read them aloud."

He rose and switched on a group of electric wall lights at my back, and I marked for the hundredth time his superb physique—his towering height, his powerful shoulders, his leanness of hip and sturdy straightness of limb. He did not look the forty years to which he confessed.

One of the long French windows which gave upon the terrace stood ajar, and before resuming his seat Cameron paused to close it, dropping over it the looped curtains of silver gray velvet that matched the walls.

In the succeeding moment the room was ghostly silent; and then, breaking against the stillness, was the sound of my own voice, reading:

"That which you have wrought shall in turn be wrought upon you. Take warning therefore of what shall happen on the seventh day hence. As sun follows sun, so follows all that is decreed. The ways of our God are many. On the righteous He showers blessings; on the evil He pours misery."

That was the first letter. The second began with the same sentence:

"That which you have wrought shall in turn be wrought upon you."

But there, tho the similarity of tenor continued, the verbal identity ceased. It went on:

"Once more, as earnest of what is decreed, there will be shown unto you a symbol of our power. Precaution cannot avail. Fine words and a smiling countenance make not virtue."

And beneath each letter was the strange silhouette which Cameron had mentioned.

It is difficult for me to convey the most meager idea of the emotional influence which these two brief communications exerted. When I had finished the reading of them aloud, Cameron, leaning far back in his chair, sat silently thoughtful, his eyes narrowed behind his glasses, but fixed apparently upon the lights behind me. And so, reluctant to interrupt his reverie, I started to read them thru again slowly, this time to myself, fixing each sentence indelibly in mind as I proceeded. But before I had quite come to the end, my companion was speaking.

"Well?" he said. And the light cheeriness of his tone was not only in marked contrast with his grave absorption of a moment before, but in jarring discord with my own present mood. "Well? What do you make of them?"

My annoyance found voice in my response.

"Cameron," I begged, "for God's sake be serious. This doesn't seem to me exactly a matter to be merry over. I don't want to alarm you, but somehow I feel that these——" and I shook the

crackling, wax-like sheets, "that these cannot be utterly ignored."

"But they are anomymous," he retorted, not unjustly. "Anonymous letters should be burned and forgotten."

"There are anonymous letters and anonymous letters," I gave him back, in turn. "These are of an unusually convincing character. Besides, they——" And then I paused. I wished to tell him of that elusive encompassment of sinister portent which had so impressed me; of that malign foreboding beyond anything warranted by the words; but I stumbled in the effort at expression. "Besides," I started again, and ended lamely, "I don't like the look and the feel of them."

And now he was as serious as I could wish.

"Ah!" he cried, leaning forward again and reaching for tne letters. "You have experienced it, too! And you can't explain it, any more than I? It is something that grips you when you read, like an icy hand, hard as steel, in a glove of velvet. It's always between the lines, reaching out, and nothing you can do will stay it. I thought at first I imagined it, but the oftener I have read, the more I have felt its clutch. The letters of themselves are nothing. What do you suppose I care for veiled threats of that sort? I'm big enough to take care of myself, Clyde. I've met peril in about every possible guise, in every part of the world, and I've never really known fear. But this—this is different. And the worst of it is, I don't know why. I can't for the life of me make out what it is I'm afraid of."

Then, with a finger pointing to the ink-stain at the bottom of one of the sheets, he asked:

"What does that look like to you?"

I took the letter from him, and scrutinizing the rude figure with concentrated attention for a moment, ventured the suggestion that it somewhat resembled a boat.

"A one-masted vessel, square-rigged," he added, in elucidation.

"Exactly."

"Now turn it upside down."

I did so.

"Now what do you see?"

"The head of a man wearing a helmet." The resemblance was very marked.

"A straw helmet, apparently," he amplified, "such as is worn in the Orient. And yet the profile is not that of an Oriental. Now, look at your vessel again." And once more I reversed the sheet of paper.

"Can it be a Chinese junk?" I asked.

"It might be a sailing proa or banca," he returned, "such as they use in the South Pacific. But whatever it is, I can't understand what it has to do with me, or I with it."

I was still studying the black daub, when he said:

"But you have haven't told me about the handwriting. What can you read of the character of the writer?"

"Nothing," I answered, promptly. "It is curious penmanship, as you say—heavy and regular and upright, with some strangely formed letters: especially the f's and the p's; but it tells me nothing."

"But I thought——" he began.

"That I boasted? So I did. When one writes as one habitually writes it is very easy. These letters, however, are not in the writer's ordinary hand. The writing is as artificial as tho you, for example, had printed a note in Roman characters. Were they addressed in the same hand?"

"Precisely."

"What was the post-mark?"

"They bore no post-mark. That is another strange circumstance. Yet they were with my mail. How they came there I have been unable to ascertain. The people at the postoffice naturally deny that they delivered anything unstamped, as these were; and Barrie, the lad who fetches the letters, has no recollection of these. Nor has Checkabeedy, who sorts the mail here at the house. But each of them lay beside my plate at breakfast—the first on the fourteenth of August; the second, this morning, the fourteenth of September."

"And they were not delivered by messenger?"

"So far as I can learn, no."

"It is very odd," I commented, with feeble banality.

I took the letters from his hands once more, and held them in turn between my vision and tne candle-light, hoping, perchance, to discover a water-mark in the paper. But I was not rewarded.

"You examined the envelopes carefully, I presume?" was my query as I returned the sheets to the table.

"More than carefully," he answerd. "But you shall see them, if you like. I found no trace of any identifying mark."

Thus far he had made no further mention of tne "puzzling happening" which followed the receipt of the first letter, and in the interest provoked by the letters themselves I had foreborne to question him; but now as the words "seventh day hence" fell again under my eye, standing out, as it were, from the rest of the script which lay upturned on the table before me, I was conscious of a stimulated concern, and so made inquiry.

"I wish you would tell me, first, whether anything really did occur on the seventh day."

"I was coming to that," he replied; but it seemed to me that prompt tho his response was, there was a shade of reluctance in his manner; for he relapsed into silence for what must have been the better part of a minute, and with eyes lowered sat seemingly lost in thought.

Then he rose, abruptly, and saying, "Suppose we go into my study, Clyde," led the way from the dining room, across the great, imposing, groined and fretted hall to that comparatively small mahogany and green symphony wherein he was wont to spend most of his indoor hours.

I remember helping myself to a cigar from the humidor which stood on the antique cabinet in the corner near the door. I was in the act of lighting it when Cameron spoke.

"I want you to sit in this chair," he said, indicating one of sumptuous leather upholstery which stood beside the writing table, facing the low, long bookcases lining the opposite wall.

I did as he bade me, while he remained standing.

"Do you, by any chance," he asked, "remember a portrait which hung above the book-shelves?"

I remembered it very well. It was a painting of himself, done some years back. But now my gaze sought it in vain.

"Certainly," I answered. "It hung there," pointing.

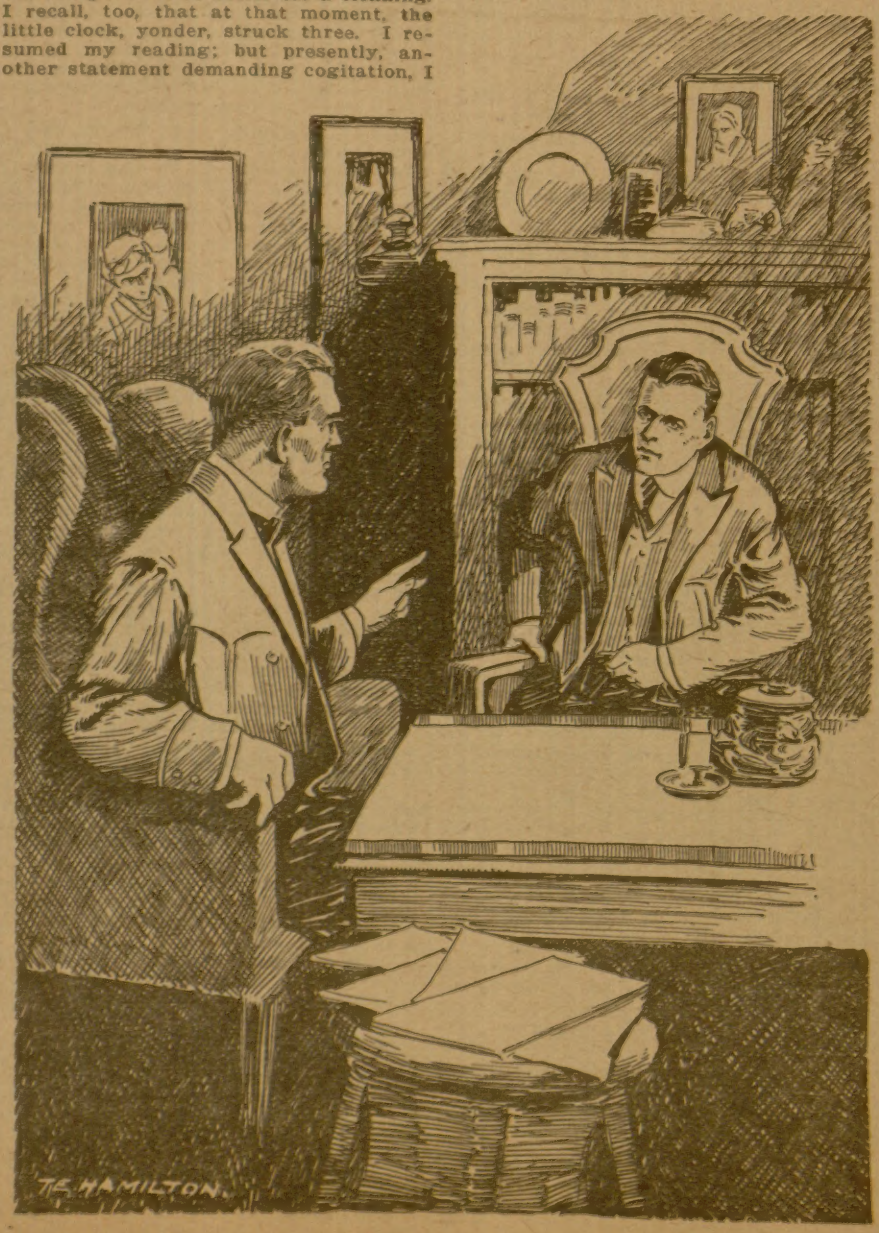
"Quite right. Now I want you to observe the shelf-top. You see how crowded it is."

It was indeed crowded. Bronze busts and statuettes; yachting and golf trophies in silver; framed photographs; a score of odds and ends, souvenirs gathered the world over. There was scarcely an inch of space unoccupied. I had frequently observed this plethora of ornament and resented it. It gave to that part of the room the semblance of a curiosity shop. When I had nodded my assent, he went on.

"On the afternoon of Friday, August twenty-first, seven days after the receipt of that first letter, I was sitting where you are sitting now. I was reading, and deeply interested. I had put the letter, as I told you, entirely out of my mind. I had forgotten it, absolutely. That seventh-day business I had regarded—if I regarded it at all—as idle vaporing. That this was the afternoon of the seventh day did not occur to me until afterwards. I recall that I paused in reading to ponder a paragraph that was not quite clear to me, and that while in contemplation I fixed my eyes upon that portrait. I remember that, because it struck me, then, that the flesh tints of the face had grown muddy and that the thing would be better for a cleaning. I recall, too, that at that moment, the little clock, yonder, struck three. I resumed my reading; but presently, another statement demanding cogitation, I lowered my book, and once more my eyes rested on the portrait. But not on the muddy flesh tints, because——" he paused and leaned forward, toward me, speaking with impressive emphasis. "Because," he repeated, "there were no flesh tints there. Because there was no head nor face there!"

I sat up suddenly, open-mouthed, speechless. Only my wide eyes made question.

"Cut from the canvas," he went on, in lowered voice, "clean and sharp from crown to collar. And the hands of the clock pointed to twelve minutes past three."



"Because," He Exclaimed, "There Was No Face or Head There!"

CHAPTER II.

RIFLE SHOTS ECHO IN THE WOODS.

OF CONVEYING even a tithe of the horror I experienced at Cameron's disclosure I am nigh hopeless. The more we discussed the occurrence the less susceptible it seemed of explanation. And what is so terrifying as the inexplicable, or so dreadful as the intangible? Here, apparently, was an enemy of calm and cunning malignity, who chose to manifest his power in a manner almost ludicrously puerile—save as it pointed with significant finger to some dire and inevitable sequel—yet with such crafty secrecy as completely to mystify and dismay.

Cameron showed me the mutilated portrait. He had taken it down almost immediately, and had hidden it away in a closet of the hall behind an array of raincoats. The cutting had been done very dexterously with an exceedingly keen blade. But that it should have been accomplished in twelve minutes, while Cameron sat in the room, not fifteen feet distant, was beyond our comprehension. Absorption in his book was the nearest we came to a solution, and that was scarcely tenable. For there was the crowded top of the book-shelves. To cut the canvas, the vandal must either have stood upon that or have reared a ladder. There was not room for the foot of a child on the shelf-top; and as for the ladder, it was unthinkable. How could a ladder have been carried in and out without Cameron being conscious of it? From every possible angle we viewed the incident, making every conceivable concession, and no half-way plausible answer to the riddle presented itself. And tho our common sense told us that the time of miracles was long past, that no Gyges' ring nor Alberich's cloak survived to this day to make invisible their wearers, there persisted, nevertheless, a chill, uncanny sense of the supernatural, quite evident to me in Cameron's hushed voice and furtive manner, and in my own unwonted nervous disquietude.

We sat very late. I wished, if possible, to learn if at any time in my friend's life he had done aught to engender an enmity to which these strange developments could be traced—whether, for instance, in the hot blood of his youth in some far land he had provoked the vengeance of one whose humor it is never to forget. As we talked I came to know Cameron better than I had ever known him before. He bared to me much of his early career; he gave me a clearer view of his temperamental qualities; and yet I could not but feel that he had left the vital point untouched, that beneath his seeming frankness there lay hidden, shielded, some one episode, perhaps, which might let the light in upon our darkness. For my question was evaded rather than answered.

Presently we went back to the letters and dissected them, coldly and critically, sentence by sentence, and while the weird influence which they had exerted upon me at the first reading increased, stimulated possibly by the incident of the portrait, still we reached a certain practical, common-sense view as to their origin; for we came to see in them what we believed to be the hand of a religious fanatic. Certain expressions, we concluded, were quotations. If they were not Biblical, they were certainly of sacred genesis. And the discovery was not reassuring. It lent, indeed, an added prick to the perturbation we already experienced.

Nor did the absence of a specified date for the second promised demonstration of power tend to relieve our uneasiness. In this silence we found the acme of cunning cruelty. Any day, at any hour, some other mystifying, soul-torturing incident was liable to occur.

I tried to argue that the seventh day was implied, inasmuch as the second note was received on the same day of the month as the first, and was a mere continuation of the original threat. But my contention lacked the intrinsic strength which carries conviction, and, as Cameon put it, we could only "watch and wait;" for the communications offered no alternative. They made no demand which being complied with would avert penalty. Only implacable and inevitable retribution, calm, patient, and determined, effused from every line.

But, in spite of Cameron's evident anxiety—and in using that term I am very mildly stating his obvious condition of mind—he sternly refused to consult either the police or the private detectives.

"You may not know," he explained, "that I am largely interested in a certain line of industrial enterprises, the shares of which are listed on the New York Stock Exchange. Should the public become aware that my life is threatened, very serious consequences might ensue in the market. No, Clyde, whatever is done, must be done by ourselves, and by friends whom we can trust absolutely. I can take no risk of this thing getting into the newspapers. Besides," he added, with a kindly, considerative smile, "Evelyn must be kept in ignorance. Not for worlds would I have her troubled by our perplexing enigma."

My suggestion that he should go abroad for a time, or at least spend a few weeks at Newport, was met with similar obstinate refusal.

"I admit that I have been somewhat upset by this extraordinary combination," was the way he expressed it, "but I am not a coward. I am not going to run. Even if I were inclined to do so, what should I gain? If a man be not safe in his own house, where in Heaven's name is he likely to find safety?"

Quite naturally I was led by this expression to inquire whether, perchance, he mistrusted any of the many persons who were employed in the house and about the estate. But, somewhat to my surprise, he was almost gravely offended by the mere suggestion. Nevertheless there were several features of the affair, chief of them the manner in which the letters were received, which caused me to dwell with some mental persistence on this as the most profitable ground for speculation. And when at length, in the morning's small hours, I returned to my home and to my bed, I carried the thought with me.

The sowing of this seed in the subconscious garden of my mind brought forth fruit after its kind. I awoke with a perfectly clear understanding of how that which, the night before, had seemed so impossible of accomplishment, was, perhaps, after all, merely a harlequin trick, quite simple when explained.

With the new day, too, and the sunlight, and the cheery brightness of my own rooms, there came a lifting of that oppressive atmosphere of the esoteric which at Cameron's had set my nerves out of plumb and my reason on the bias. Indeed I was fully convinced that we had been foolishly constructing an Alpine chain out of a miserable little row of mole hills, and I determined to lose no time in bringing Cameron, whom I now regarded as most needlessly alarmed, to my own wholesome way of thinking.

Directly after breakfast, therefore, I set forth on foot for my neighbor's, choosing the shore road as the most direct of the two routes.

Personally, my taste in landscape is for distant view in preference to near-at-hand foliage. My own house, which is fashioned in semblance of a Pompeiian villa, its cream-white walls punctuated with shutters of a somewhat vivid pea-

green and crowned by gently sloping roofs of the same bright color, gazes out across Stamford Harbor and the blue waters of the Sound, to where on clear days the penciled outline of Eaton's Neck shows purple in the distance. There are no towering, umbrageous trees to interrupt the outlook; only low, carefully-trimmed shrubs, adorning a series of marble sculpture-dotted terraces, well below the line of vision. But the Cameron place, reflecting the Townsbury penchant for arborculture, is quite the reverse. The prospect from the windows and verandas of the fine old mansion is all green vistas and leafy perspectives, with only a glint of sun-sparkled waves, chance-caught between gray boles or when the wind spreads a momentary opening in the foliage.

My way to Cameron's led thru a veritable forest of such luxuriant leafage that the path more than half the time was in twilight, while to right and left the shadows deepened into dark in the cloistral recesses of the woodland heart. The silence was profound. No voice of bird nor scurrying foot of squirrel invaded the morning hush of those famous depths. My own footsteps on the soft turf returned no sound.

A half mile or more I had walked in this mute greenwood peace, when sharp and clear there echoed thru the verdurous aisles the crack of a rifle, and I came to a sudden, involuntary halt.

Then it occurred to me that it was the third day of the open season for rail birds, and that it was the report of a shotgun I had heard, fired by some sportsman, off on the shore, there, to my right. And so I resumed my tramp, with ears keen for a repetition. Almost immediately I was rewarded, and then I knew that it was no rail bird gunner, for the shot was unmistakably a rifle shot, and it was fired in the depth of the wood, to the left of me.

Three times more I heard it, in fairly rapid succession, and sounding always from about the same direction. I cannot say that it gave me any uneasiness, but it perplexed me in a mild way, arousing a passing curiosity as to its object. And then I came out upon the well-kept, graveled drive which circles the close-cropped, velvety Cameron lawn, and catching sight of Cameron himself, in riding breeches and puttees, romping with one of his picturesquely graceful Russian wolf-hounds, promptly forgot all about it.

He came to me, the great, gaunt white hound pressing close to his side, and I thought I saw that he, too, had experienced the inspiriting influence of the morning.

"I have found an answer," I cried, while he was still fifty yards away, "possibly THE answer."

He raised his brows in question, and the hound, with open jaws, fondled his wrist.

"I had a horseback ride before breakfast," he told me, as he shook my hand. "Then I spent an hour at the kennels. We've a fine new brood of collie puppies. You must see them."

"I want to," I returned.

"What do you say to tennis?" he suggested, irrelevantly. "Just a set. It's a fine morning for tennis."

"If you can lend me a pair of shoes," I consented, glaring down at my boots.

"A dozen pairs," he smiled. "Come up to my dressing room. Louis will fit you out."

I was scarcely prepared for this change in my friend's mood, and far from happy over it. He was evidently determined to ignore the subject that had so engrossed us the night before, hoping to find surcease of harassing thoughts in a restless round of activities. The condition was a morbid one which I believed should be discouraged; the more so as I possessed what I fancied was a perfectly practical solution of that which hitherto had seemed to us an inexplicable phenomenon. And I was a little annoyed, too, that my good tidings should be thus disregarded.

When, therefore, we had entered the hall and Cameron was leading towards the broad, ascending staircase, I paused.

"Do you mind giving me just a minute?"

He stopped, turned, and stood in questioning silence.

"A minute in your study," I added, in explanation.

Reluctantly, it seemed to me, he crossed to the study door, and throwing it open, stood aside that I might precede him.

The room appeared far less grim and gloomy than when I had last entered it. Its windows faced the south; and between the olive-green tapestry curtains the sun poured in a flood, lighting up the far corners, glinting on the gilt ornaments of the writing table, and bathing in dazzling splendor the burnished bronzes on the crowded top of the book shelves.

"I see you are not disposed to resume our discussion of last night," I began, when Cameron, having closed the door behind him, halted inside, and with hands in pockets, awaited my opening. "But I want to show you that we have been in very much the same position as the wondering children who watch a magician. We have imagined something amazingly like a miracle, which, in point of fact, is capable of a very simple, commonplace explanation."

"You mean the cutting out of the head of the portrait?' he asked, with kindling interest.

"I do."

"You have discovered how it was done, before my eyes, so to speak, and yet?——"

"I have discovered how it may have been done," I interrupted.

He moved his head just perceptibly from side to side in skeptical gesture.

"The door of this room is seldom locked?" I queried, ignoring the indicated skepticism.

"Never locked," he answered.

"It would be quite possible for any one, knowing that you were absent, to spend an hour or so here, uninterrupted?"

"Any one?" he questioned.

"Any one who had gained entrance to the house," I amplified.

"Oh, yes, I presume so."

"They would have ample time to clear a space on the book shelves, climb up, and carefully cut out the head, or any part, or the whole of a portrait, if they were so inclined?"

I paused for his answer, but he only smiled with a sort of incredulous tolerance.

"Would they not?" I insisted. But Cameron was most perverse this morning.

"My dear Clyde," he scoffed, "of what use is all this? The portrait was cut, not while I was absent, but while I was present. I saw it complete at three o'clock; at twelve minutes past three, it was mutilated."

"My contention is, I explained, quite patiently, "that while you saw it complete at three oclock, the cut had already been made, but the cut portion had not been removed. In other words, the cutting having been deftly done with a thin, sharp knife, it was perfectly feasible to leave the portrait apparently intact, tho with the slightest effort the incised portion could subsequently be released—with, say, a piece of cord, gued to the back for that especial purpose."

Now that I had made myself clear, Cameron was quick to acknowledge the possibility of such a method.

"And the cord, you mean, led down behind the book shelves, and perhaps thru a window?" he suggested.

"Precisely. And was pulled by some one on the outside."

"Yes," he said, thoughtfully. "Such an explanation is not unreasonable. The thing, really, must have been done in some such way."

"And don't you see," I hurried on with my advantage, "how utterly cheap this makes the whole affair? There's nothing at all impressive in that performance when you find out how it was done. If the next demonstration is no better than such claptrap, you may rest assured you have a very picayunish sort of mountebank villain to deal with. So, cheer up, my dear man, and I'll show you a few tricks at tennis that may be equally eye-opening."

Unquestionably my friend appeared relieved. But I came to fancy later that the appearance was feigned for my benefit. Certainly he was not convinced, and in that he proved himself possessed of an intuition, a world more accurate than my own.

Just Below It I Found Four Scattered Bullet Holes.

CHAPTER III.

THE TARGET.

THE set at tennis having finished with victory perching on my banners, I made excuse to put off the inspection of the collie puppies until another time, resumed my walking boots and, with a parting if futile admonition to Cameron to "think no more about it," started on my homeward way.

My route lay again thru the miniature forest, for the day had waxed uncomfortably warm with the approach of noon, and there was scant shade on the high-road between our two houses. In the wood, however, the air was gratefully cool, and I strode on at a good pace, breathing deeply and with enjoyment the bosky odors which greeted me afresh at every step.

The dead silence which I had remarked earlier was broken now by the hoarse tooting of a steamboat whistle, somewhere off shore, and by the shrill voices of birds, apparently in resentful protest at this raucous invasion of their sylvan quiet.

I had succeeded in putting aside, for the moment at least, all thought of Cameron, his anonymous letters, and his mutilated portrait, and was dwelling on my disappointment at not having caught even so much as a glimpse of Evelyn Grayson during my morning visit to Cragholt. It is true that I had gone there with a single purpose in mind—to convey to Cameron what I believed to be an important theory—but underlying this, I realized now, was more than a hope, a confidence even, that I should see Evelyn. I was tempted, indeed, to a regret that I had not waited, visited the kennels, and accepted Cameron's invitation for luncheon, which would doubtless have insured me a few words at least with my Goddess of Youth.

While on the verge of this self-reproach my spirits suddenly lifted, for the steam whistle having died away in the distance and the feathered choristers having relapsed into a pleased chirp that merely accented the stillness, there broke all at once on the mute calm of the woodland the silver sweetness of a girl's singing. Clear and resonant it rang thru the forest aisles; a voice I knew beyond mistaking. Evelyn Grayson was coming towards me over the scented turf. Still hidden by a bend in the path, the melody alone measured for me her approach.

And then she came around the turn. At first she did not see me, for her eyes were lifted with her voice, and I had time to mark the fascinating grace of her long, free stride, before she became conscious of my presence and checked and shortened it. She wore a frock of white serge, the skirt's edge at her ankles, revealing dainty, snowy buckskin ties and just a peep of white silk hose. And her flower-like face looked out thru a frame of Leghorn straw and pink roses, tied snugly beneath her softly rounded chin with the filmiest of long, floating white veils. You can imagine the picture she made, there in this green glade, with her big blue eyes alight with glad surprise, and the warm blood suddenly risen in her cheeks.

"You truant!" I cried, in jocular reprimand. "Are you always going to run away when I visit Cragholt?"

She pouted prettily. I detest a woman who pouts, ordinarily. There is usually such palpable affectation about it. But Evelyn's pouting was winsome as an infant's. Besides it was only momentary. Then her eyes flashed and her foot was planted very hard, for such a tiny thing, on the green grass blades.

"I'm not a truant," she declared, with feigned indignation, "and I never thought of running away. That's just your conceited manly imagination. You fancy that everything I do can have but one cause, and that is yourself. How, pray, was I to know you intended paying us a morning call?"

"Tut, tut," I caught her up. "What a little spitfire we have here! If you hadn't deserted me so shamefully last evening, I shouldn't have minded this morning, so much. As it is, it seems æons since I saw you."

Now she smiled until her dimples nestled. "That is much better," she returned gayly, "and deserves a reply, just as my action of last evening deserves praise and not rebuke. I sacrificed myself and my pleasure for one I love."

"Not for me, surely!"

"Did I use the word conceit, a moment ago? Are you the only man I love?"

"I hope so," I answered, impudently.

"There is another," she confessed, in mock tragedy. "Behold his face!"

I had not noticed that she had held a little roll in her hand, for my eyes had been ever on hers; so, when, abruptly, she spread out and held before me the missing head from Cameron's portrait, I was doubly unprepared. I know I was startled. She said afterwards that I went very white. I suppose I did; for with the rush of realization came such a chain of supposition as to drive me momentarily dizzy. For a second or more I stood dumb, while my hand went out in eager reach for the scrap of canvas, which, I had observed, instantaneously, bore four perforations, all of a size—the size of a rifle bullet. With that discovery had recurred the shots I had heard; and following this, came a maze of conjecture, going back to that first letter, then to the painting's mutilation, and on thru devious ways to the morning's target practice; and always with one or another of Cameron's trusted servants as the chief actor.

When I recovered my composure I found Evelyn backing wilfully away from my covetous hand.

"It is the picture of the man I love," she was saying, teasingly. "A very, very good man."

"But where did you get it?" I asked, seriously. "Do you know where it came from?"

Suddenly she was as grave as I could wish.

"I found it nailed to a tree," she answered. "Wasn't it odd? How do you suppose it came there? It looks like the portrait that hung in Uncle Robert's study. Do you suppose he grew to dislike it, and cut it up and threw it away?"

Now I found myself in some little embarrassment. If I was to obey Cameron's injunction I could not tell Evelyn the truth. Yet I was in no position to make light of her find. On the other hand I must learn from her just where she had come upon it, and so trace, if possible, the person who had fired the shots which riddled it.

"My dear girl," I said, adopting a tone of cajolery, "we have here, I think, a matter in which we both can be of service, very valuable service, indeed, to that beloved uncle and guardian of yours. But, you must trust me, absolutely, and, for the present at least, you must give to him no hint of what we have in hand. Do you understand?"

She laughed in that merry rippling fashion which I had found not the least of her charms.

"Do I understand?" she repeated, laying a hand on my arm in emphasis of her amused tolerance. "Do I understand? Of course I don't, and I shan't, until you have answered at least a half-dozen whys and whats."

"But you must trust me," I insisted, "and as primary evidence of that trust you will proceed at once to hand over

to me, for examination, that somewhat damaged piece of portraiture which you are holding behind you."

Very wide her eyes opened in an innocent, almost infantile stare, as she asked:

"Do you really mean it, Philip?"

"Really," I answered, gravely. "I'd like to tell you all about it, right here and now, but that might spoil everything, so you must show what a strong womanly woman you are, by keeping silence and waiting."

In token of compliance she gave me the oval piece of canvas.

"I wonder who punched the holes in it!" she remarked, ruefully. "Whoever it was, they were shockingly disrespectful."

I tried to fancy what she would have said had she known they were bullet holes. Evidently that possibility had not occurred to her and I was glad that it had not.

"There are two ways of looking at it," I replied, my eyes fixed on the canvas and its perforations. "At first glance it does seem spiteful; but then there is a chance that it is not iconoclasm, after all. It may be, you know, just the reverse. I have not infrequently seen portraits that were so unjust to the originals that they fairly cried out for destruction."

"But this not one like that," she retorted. "This seems to me a very good portrait. I am sure Uncle Roberts must have looked exactly like it, ten years ago."

"Alas, we do not all see with the same eyes," I assured her smiling. "The destroyer may have looked on it as a caricature, not having your cultured taste in art." I held it off at arm's length, and after regarding it critically for a moment between half-closed lids, I continued: "Do you think you could point out the identical tree to which it was nailed?"

"I could try," was her answer.

"Is it far?"

"Not very. A mile, from here, possibly. Over the ridge."

"Near anything in particular?"

"Near the trail which leads up from the trout stream to the entrance drive not far from the Lodge."

"When will you take me there?" I asked.

For just an instant she hesitated.

"We might go now," she replied, "if it weren't that I was expecting Celia Ainslee for luncheon. Suppose we say five o'clock. You can meet me at the Lodge. It's a short walk from there."

"Fine!" I approved, thrusting the portrait head beneath my arm and taking possession of both her white-gloved hands. Slender and shapely hands, yet wonderfully capable.

"Good-by!" she cried, laughing. "Take care of my uncle!" with a glance towards her punctured find.

"Good-by!" I returned, releasing her. "Your uncle shall have my most faithful concern."

I stood watching her until a turn in the path enfolded her from my sight. Her uncle was the focal point of a crafty conspiracy, the seriousness of which I had been foolishly endeavoring to minimize; and as such he was in need, not only of my concern, but of all the loyal, energetic and efficient aid of which I was capable.

CHAPTER IV.
THE CHINESE SERVANT.

FOUR O'CLOCK found me rapping at the door of Cragholt Lodge. Considering that it was built thirty-five years ago by one of the Townsbury family, who probably read English novels but had never been nearer to England than Coney Island, it possessed a surprising picturesqueness, due in large part to its covering of dark English ivy.

I had anticipated my appointment with Evelyn by a full hour; for I wished to question old Romney, the lodge keeper; and the questions were not for milady's ear.

He opened to me promptly, in person, this odd, rugged old man, with his seamed brow and great shock of iron-gray hair and beard. He was in his shirt sleeves, but on seeing me he reached for his coat, which hung on a peg beside the door.

"Never mind the coat, Romney," I said, "don't make yourself uncomfortable on my account. It's a warm afternoon."

"It is warmish, sir," he assented, but despite my protest he was thrusting his arms into the coat sleeves. "It's been an uncommon hot September. Won't you step inside, sir?"

He knew his place too well to indicate any surprise at my visit; yet I felt he must be curious over an event so unusual.

"I have an inquiry or two to make, Romney," I told him, as, accepting his suggestion, I stepped into his cozy, old-fashioned sitting room. "I heard some shooting over this way this morning, and I've been wondering whether the game laws weren't being broken."

He placed a cushioned rocking-chair for me, and I sat down.

"Now did you hear that, too, Mr. Clyde?" he asked, brightening, as he leaned against the low sill of one of the daintily curtained windows. "'Twas about ten o'clock, sir; a little after, maybe. I was doin' a bit of trimmin' on the hedge outside, sir, when them same shots set me a-thinkin' that very thing. An' right away, sir, I says to myself, says I, 'It's that Chink what just went up to the house to borrow a rifle.'"

"That Chink?" I repeated, puzzled.

"Yes, sir. Yellow Chinee boy, sir. He works for Mr. Murphy, the artist, what has the bungalow, down on the shore near Cos Cob. About half an hour before that he comes by here on his way up to the house. 'What's wantin'?' I asks. 'Mistle Mulfy,' he says, 'wantee bollow lifle, shootee weasel, stealee chickee.' 'All right,' I tells him, and away he goes. So, you see, sir, when I hears the shots I thinks right away that Mr. Murphy's Chink is tryin' his 'bollowed lifle' on some of Mr. Cameron's pheasants, maybe. But fifteen minutes later, along comes John again, with an innocent grin on his face, the rifle over his shoulder, and his hands empty as air. Well, to be sure, I stops him, sir. 'You been shootin' in the woods?' I asks. 'No shootee,' he grins back. 'Me no shootee.' Then, sir, I swears at him, good and hearty, and calls him what he is. But all he can say is, 'No lie; me no shootee.' Then I asks him if he didn't hear a gun go off. 'Gun?' he says, as if he didn't know what gun meant. 'Iifle,' I explains. 'Yes, yes,' says he, 'me hear lifle shootee. Not my lifle.' 'Whose lifle?' I asks him. 'Man with lifle, up load,' he says, pointing back. An' that was all I could get out of him, sir."

I should have been amused, I suppose, by old Romney's recital. It was certainly very graphic, and his imitation of the Chinaman was histrionically artistic—I fear the stage missed a comedian of merit when Romney took to lodge-keeping—but at the first mention of the Oriental, I had pricked my ears, and thruout the narration my mind was busy with those strangely worded letters of Cameron's and those still stranger blots which looked one way like a Chinese junk and the other way like a coolie in a straw helmet. The possibility of a connection, especially in view of the rifle and the perforated painting, seemed to me the reverse of remote. And yet I could hardly reconcile the the notion of this apparently ignorant Mongolian being in any wise interested in bringing disaster upon a person so far removed from him in every way as was Cameron; much less in evolving or taking part in such a crafty plot as everything we had thus far learned of it indicated this to be.

My questioning of Romney shed very little new light on the subject. He had seen the Chinaman pass the Lodge on several occasions; he had rarely entered the grounds, however. I tried to ascertain what his "rarely" meant, and finally got him to say that in the past six months, "John," as he called him, had visited Cragholt, on one pretext or another, possibly three or four times. But Romney's memory for dates was exceedingly feeble. He could not recollect whether one of those times was on or about the twenty-first of August. He was equally at a loss concerning the fourteenth of August and the fourteenth of September.

"What do you know of this artist, Murphy, who employs John?" I asked.

"Not much, sir," was his answer. "They do say as he is rather eccentric, sir. He and the Chink lives alone there in the bungalow, summer and winter. He's a big red-headed and bearded fellow, sir. I did hear a story as to him gettin' into a fight up at Garrison's Hotel in Greenwich village, and nearly killin' three young watermen near as big as himself."

"Has he lived here long?"

"Goin' on two years, now, sir."

"He paints and sells pictures I suppose?"

"Maybe, sir. I never sees any, tho. But they calls him an artist, sir."

I determined to visit Murphy on the pretext of purchasing some of his work, and in this manner learn, if possible, something more of his Celestial servitor.

"Of course you didn't see any one else with a rifle, today?" I asked, in conclusion. "The 'man with lifle up load' didn't materialize?"

"No, sir. Not another soul, sir. I asked some of the boys—them as has charge of the deer in the preserve, over the way the shootin' sounded. But they hadn't seen no one, either, sir. Tho they did hear the shots."

I thanked Romney for his interest—he knew I was one of the State game wardens—and admonished to keep his own counsel as to my visit, leaving the impression with him that I wished to round up the culprit, and feared if my activity in the matter were scented my prey would be put on his guard and thus escape me.

It still lacked twenty minutes of the hour of my appointment with Evelyn when I issued from the Lodge, and to occupy the time I entered the wide gateway between the great stone pillars with their heraldic shields, and sauntered leisurely along the smooth macadam drive, bordered by sentinel elms.

My thoughts were busy with the new line of conjecture which Romney had unconsciously opened up for me. I wondered whether by any possibility this eccentric painter, Murphy, could be personally involved. Was Cameron acquainted with him? Had they ever quarreled? From what Romney had told me of the affair at Garrison's, the artist was evidently of a bellicose disposition. He had come here two years ago. Cameron had owned Cragholt less than a year. Perhaps at the time he was preparing the mansion for occupancy he had offended the too sensitive Murphy, who—I was letting my imagination run free—may have wished to take a hand at the new decoration. It would probably be well for me to see Cameron before seeing the artist. The involutions of my hypothetical train led me, I fear, into many monstrously preposterous conceits; yet, as subsequent events proved, the cogitation in which I indulged on that afternoon walk was not wholly idle. Altho the working out was along lines which I was then far from foreseeing, it was curious, in looking back, to observe how very closely, collaterally, even at that stage, I came to the truth.

In the midst of my revery, the rhythm of horse's hoofs on the drive awoke me to time and place. And as I raised my eyes, I saw, still some distance away, but bearing down upon me at a swift single-foot, the slim girlish figure of Evelyn Grayson, in white waist and gray habit, mounted on Prince Charley, a buckskin cayuse, which for saddle purposes she preferred to all the thorobreds in the Cameron stables.

"Am I late?" she cried, reining the wiry little animal to a stand beside me. "Celia Ainslee just left. She was expecting the Lentilhons to stop for her in their motor boat, but tney broke down and were delayed, and instead of coming at three o'clock, it was half-past four before they landed."

"I fancy you are just on the minute," was my response, as I consulted my timepiece.

"But I'm still a mile from the Lodge," she argued.

"And all the nearer to the trail," I condoned. "It must be somewhere about here, isn't it?"

"You've passed it. It's just beyond that next bend." And she pointed over my shoulder.

"Why didn't you bring a groom with you to hold your steed?" I asked, smiling. "You don't expect to ride Prince Charley into the forest fastnesses, do you?"

"I could," she answered, promptly. "I will, if you dare me. He can pick his way like a cat. But it isn't necessary. He'll stand forever, the dear thing, if I drop the bridle rein over his head."

My preference was to have her on foot at my side, and so I did not dare her. And thus it chanced that we left the homely little animal standing with drooping head and dangling rein on the shadowed side of the driveway, and went off together down the narrow, slow-descending trail, the girl in the lead.

The slanting sunlight, shooting its golden arrows in intermittent volleys thru the tree tops, made target of her hair as we passed, scoring brilliant flashes of burnished bronze. Her hat, a broad-brimmed sailor of coarse black straw, was but a poor shield for that shimmering, tawny coil that lay low on her neck, and the darting rays had their will with it. I have never before or since seen hair just like Evelyn Grayson's. There was such a wealth of it, and its color was so elusive. Under dim lights it seemed a prosaic brown, but with small encouragement it changed to a light fawn, streaked with lustrous topaz strands; which in the sun's blaze became a dazzling bronze glory.

"I'm pretty sure I can find the tree," she asserted, as she swung along with

(Continued on Page 16.)

The Avenger's Strange Story

By Alvah Milton Kerr

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I FOUND my "hobo" as I loitered thru a dingle among the hills. He lay stretched out by a little scrap of fire in a veritable "tramps' nest," dreamily watching a black coffee pot simmering on the coals. Scattered about were rusty tin cans, old pans, a battered wash boiler and castoff clothing; overhead spread a green roof of boughs, while a brook, slipping down thru the clump of trees from its wanderings among the hills, gave off a pleasant warble.

Unobserved, I stood still watching the vagabond. Frankly, to me a ruin of any sort is always interesting; it means history, tragedy, performance played out to the final end. A tramp is something like that.

This one presently sat up, poked at the fire with his dilapidated shoe, and looked around at the blackened cooking utensils, at the ground, worn hard and smooth by the bodies of many houseless sleepers and up at a piece of board nailed against the trunk of a tree. Following his eyes with my own, I read, scrawled upon the board with charcoal, the ironical legend: "God Bless Our Home!"

The sarcasm and humor of the thing smote me hard, and I burst out laughing.

The man turned a pair of big, startled eyes to my face for an instant, a smile ran wrinkling thru the stubble of beard about his mouth. "Good morning," he said, with a gentility nice enough for a prince.

"Will you come in?" he said with a singularly mellow and agreeable voice. With a respectful "Thank you," I walked in among the trees as one might thru the door of a mansion.

"Honor me by being seated," he suavely said, waving his hand toward the ground, and I sat down on the dirt floor of the "nest" and took off my hat. We looked at each other a moment, grinned broadly, and were acquainted.

Craving my pardon, he stepped to the brook, washed two tomato cans clean, and came back and filled them with coffee from the pot. Opening a bundle which lay at the root of a tree, he drew out several packages, from one of which he poured some sugar into the cans of coffee, and proffered me one with great courtesy. We drank, and as reclined upon his elbow, drawing down the steaming beverage with slight, grateful sighs, I scanned him narrowly. He was a long man, gaunt, tanned, rusty, with strong features and large eyes and large head, while out of the whole of him was spoken a story of tragedy, of sin or sorrow, or disappointment, or subtle knavery, I could not determine which. He was probably not over thirty years of age; at a casual glance he looked forty.

"Frankly," I said, "you interest me. I would give a pretty penny to know your history."

"Would you, indeed? A tramp's history ought to be entertaining, eh? Well, I am in sore need of the 'penny' I assure you. In the present juncture of my affairs no man could well appreciate that more than I. But the story you solicit isn't a pretty one, and you wouldn't believe it should I tell it to you."

He had a glib facility of words that surprised me. The more coffee he drank, the better he talked. Fixing me by times with eyes that grew lustrous and swimming with a kind of fire, but in the main looking away, as it might be, at a scenic transaction in the air, he went on:

"I might prove it to you, I think; besides, I have held the story long enough in silence. You shall have it for what it is worth. You will understand why at the end. You are a lawyer, are you not. Yes? I thought so. Well, I was a lawyer once, or maybe a doctor, or an artist, or an actor, or—it matters not. I was anything you may care to guess but this that I seem now."

He fell silent for a moment, staring at the ground with a smoldering glimmer of something, fun or fear, in his eyes. "You will doubtless think me troubled with a bad imagination," he said, "but a true remembrance of some facts is sufficient, without calling in the wizard fancy. I was thinking where I should commence, if at the natural beginning of the story, or at the unnatural end, or at the prosaic middle. Anyway, the tale need not be long. It should be sufficient to say, as a preliminary, that I once found myself in Florida, partly from purpose, partly as a fish might instinctively follow a warming current to easy feeding ground.

"It was low down in the State, south even of Punta Rassa, where the green land melts away into the blue gulf, that I began haunting a certain winter resort hotel. It was a huge, airy structure, with pillared front and broad, double galleries, and I think had once been a great plantation house. At any rate it was delightful."

I nodded assent, wondering more and more at this phenomenal vagrant. "Were you a—a tramp at that time?" I ventured.

"In the most extreme acceptation of that term," he replied, with a dry kind of smile. "I didn't dare be else. You see, I was a murderer—at least, certain people in a certain town in a certain State thought I was, which effected much the same thing. By the way, have you smoking tobacco with you?" He drew a pipe out from somewhere among his rags.

"I usually stick some cigars in my pocket when I start out on a ramble," I said. "Yes, here are a couple. Have one."

He thanked me and presently began to smoke. "It's nice," he said, quietly; then, after a moment's silence: "It was an interesting building. I saw it from many quarters of the compass, for I spent days in its vicinity. You see, a mulatto kitchen maid of the hotel developed an odd compassion for me, and thru her I found food plentiful. The building stood waist deep in tropic

greenery on a soft knoll, looking out on a broad, forest covered country.

"Many beautiful roads wound here and there thru the forest, and the balm of pines was always in one's nostrils. A lazy river came down from the north, loitered southward a couple of miles, and spread its waters in a cypress swamp covering thousands of acres of land. In this bewildering web of waterways—my mulatto friend told me this—lay a sort of island, and on this, as one gone out of the human world, lived a creature half man and half devil. A crime committed elsewhere, so it was whispered, had sent him there, and, isolation, remorse, and a wild beast mode of life, had bred insanity in the man coupled with wolfish savagery and monkey cunning.

"Naturally, to the black people of the region, as well as to some of lighter skin, the rumored presence of such a person in the swamp was a kind of daily nightmare. For three years, so the story went, he had been seen occasionally, now upon the river at night, sending his canoe flying thru the shadows, or less frequently in the daytime, stealing out thru the bayous into the open, and shooting his little craft back into the maze of liquid lanes at sight of a human face. The landlord, a hard-headed Northerner, affected a lofty contempt for the 'yarn,' it seems, and the guests, who were in great part people wintering in this sunny latitude accepted it sparingly. To me the tale was peculiarly awakening, for in my life had occurred that which made a case of this sort supremely interesting.

"I began to haunt the edge of the swamp, and before a week had elapsed I saw the man. He had a fearsome aspect; a tangle of black hair, hanging about a yellow, sharp-nosed face, a half naked figure, topped with a cap that looked to be the feathered breast-skin of a flamingo, and eyes that looked out from under it, startled, furtive, glittering. I got but a glimpse of him, for at sight of me he shot his canoe under a drooping screen of vines and vanished. It was small wonder that people feared the man, I reflected, seeing how dreadful was his look.

"That evening I lay housed in shadow at the foot of a terrace near the big house on the knoll, munching my tramp's supper from a newspaper, and watching the dusk close blue and gray upon the landscape. I was ruminating, rather sadly, I guess, for I remember that the grave case of the man in the swamp and my own outlawed state, set so close against the loud enjoyment of life in and about the big hotel, caused my supper to choke me disagreeably.

"Later a tremendous copper moon came heavily over the world's rim to the eastward, and music struck up in the house and dancing began. For years I had never willingly witnessed or lingered within earshot of a dance, so bitter a memory flowed out of it. Even the sound of such a performance was painful to me. And now, with the first soft shuffle of feet, I got up and hurried down to the river and along its marge, until the music of the dance was no more than a vague whisper behind me.

"Then I sat down upon a grassy bank, and was presently considering the mental picture I wished to escape. A thousand times I had sworn that I would think of it no more, and would entirely give over the harsh purpose of revenge which had grown out of it; but now the man in the swamp and the music of the dance brought all back with fresh horror and clearness.

"As if it were a part of yesterday, I remembered the black transaction, and with that inexpressible deviltry he did it." The speaker fell into a little silence. "You see," he went on, suddenly, "the man got possessed of the notion that his wife loved me; that was why he killed her. And yet he was utterly mistaken. She cared not a straw for me before she married him or afterward. She told me that frankly more than once. But she did like the way I danced; that was undeniable. In that way we seemed prepared for each other by nature, like the tones of a special chord of harmony

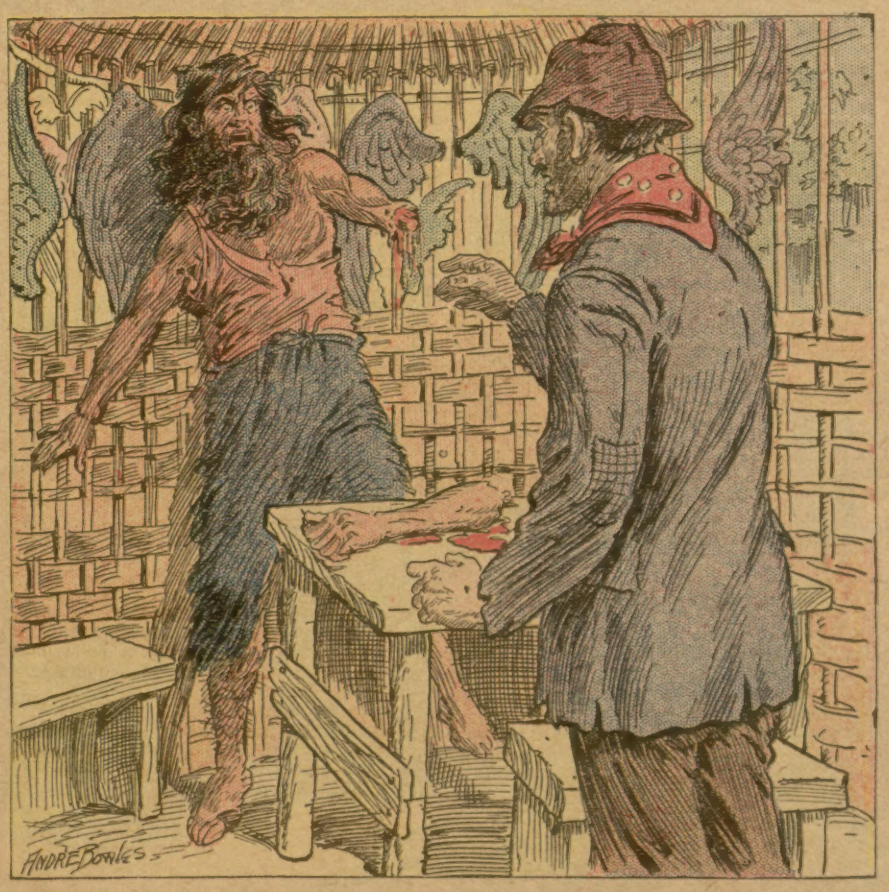
"Even at this distance it moves me oddly to remember the sense of rhythm and perfect unison of motion when we floated together thru the dance. But he didn't like it; quite naturally, perhaps, but nevertheless his jealousy was execrable. Had I loved the woman? Yes; he and I had secretly fought over her when we were boys together. Of course, I should have kept away from her entirely after their marriage, but that was hardly possible since we moved in the same social set. Well, in the end he forbade her going to dances where I was known to have been invited. Had he wholly understood her, he might have cared as little as she really cared for me. But men do not understand women, or rarely. Comprehending themselves so little, how can they?

"Well, once he started on a long journey, but secretly returned and found his wife gone with a lady friend, and that friend's husband, to a dancing party. It chanced that I was at the party, and once during the evening the young wife and I stood by a window in the conservatory, after the single dance she had given me. The rooms were hot and we had gone to the window to rest and enjoy the cool air. There were other couples in the conservatory, but when these had gone back to join the dancers we lingered a little, looking out into the fragrant darkness, for the house stood in a bower of greenery and flowers.

"As we turned to re-enter the big room where the dancing was in full play, her husband suddenly entered the conservatory thru a door which led out on a narrow balcony. His face was purple and distorted, and his eyes glittered like an angry snake's. It's odd how devilish jealous rage makes a man look! We three were alone, and the wife sprang to meet him with outstretched hands and beaming face, but he caught her roughly and turned her half way round as if to spurn her. In that position she eagerly lifted her lips to kiss him, turning her head back with white throat bare; but even while she lifted her lips to his, he struck a knife across her throat and caught her up and laid her in my arms. I was literally baptized with her blood!

"'She seems bound to have you, so I gave her to you!' he rasped out thru his teeth. 'I hope you may enjoy your conquest!' and he turned, and, leering back over his shoulder, slipped out into the night thru the door.

"I staggered back an instant, gasping, inarticulate with horror. Across this bit of hell the music of the dance was rippling. With a cry I dropped the dying woman on a divan and leaped after the man. My blood roared thru all my veins and boomed inside my skull; I seemed running thru flames, so wild a craving



"Dead Man, Go to Your Grave."

to kill the man possessed me.

"The house stood on the outskirts of the town, with open fields beyond. Across these open spaces I sped after him in the moonlight. Once I came close to him. He paused just beyond a fence with the red knife lifted. I was unarmed, but I leaped the fence and plunged at his throat. With a quick movement, he swept my feet from under me, and in a breath's time was on my chest with uplifted knife. 'I could kill you as well as not,' he panted, 'but you will look prettier dangling from the gallows' beam! Go back! No one has seen me. They will want you as the murderer!' Then he sprang up and darted into a wood.

"Well, I hunted for him like a madman until morning, was then arrested, escaped the following night, disguised myself as a tramp, and began a life of vagabondage, looking always for him. It was rather odd, don't you think? The innocent man hunting for the murderer, the law hunting for the innocent man, the murderer being compassionately searched for by his mystified friends, while the guilty man himself was a fugitive from his own conscience and me. Yes, when I think of it now it seems odd.

"As you may easily surmise, memory of all this was big and bitter in me that night as I sat on the river's marge in Florida, hearing the faint music of the dance now and then like a haunting whisper at my ear. A band of moonlight lay across the bank and cut athwart the water like a silver ribbon, and presently I saw a human shape come into it from the direction of the house. It was the man of the swamp! He passed not ten feet from me, with fingers stopping his ears and wild eyes turned back over his shoulder toward the glowing building on the knoll. He might have served for a picture of Cain flying from Eden. Suddenly he stopped and listened, then, to my utter amazement, in a sort of pantomime, he rehearsed his part in the tragedy of the conservatory. To me it was as vivid and real as a scene revealed by a burst of lightning. All the motions of it he accompanied with frightful words, ending in a high, empty rattle of laughter.

"There stood the man who had injured me beyond all expression—a fiend debased and demented by the largeness of his sin! With a burning thrill of horror he seemed to shrink to the stature of an ape, staring and staring and dividing his breath into little gasps, then suddenly dashed me flat, bounded over me and down the bank with incredible fleetness, leaped into a canoe at the water's edge, and shot out into the stream.

"A pistol, for him, always lay in my pocket, and I scrambled up, drew it, and fired twice. At the second report I heard a kind of snarling cry; then the canoe passed into the shadow of trees down the opposite shore and was lost to view.

"There was no sleep for me that night. Do you think it a little thing that I had been an outcast for four years? That this man had barred the door of Paradise for me by wedding the woman I loved, and had slain her, and pushed the crime upon me? Do you doubt that I cared to put the blame where it belonged and be a man among men again?

"Well, before daybreak I was in a canoe in the swamp, among a buried realm of liquid lanes flanked with brown tree trunks, that bore aloft a roof of matted vines and interlacing boughs thru which actual sunshine never fell. On all sides were writhing heaps of knotted cypress roots, and vines that leaped aloft like huge brown ropes and hung along the dim ceiling webbed and festooned with veils of silver moss. The air was a bluish twilight, the water like amber oil.

"I sat kneeling upon my knees in the canoe as I paddled, a revolver and knife by my side. As I glanced along the fantastic tunnels snakes slipped from the cypress knees, and far and near, echoing thru the oozy aisles, came the splash and snoring suspiration of alligators. I may have progressed a mile or more, driving for the swamp's center, when I entered a broad pool over which the matted roof arched lofty and thin. The light was green crystal in this leafy cavern, and out of it a path burrowed eastward to solid and slightly higher ground. A canoe swung under drooping ferns at the marge, spotted here and there with crimson, like that from human veins. 'Ah,' thought I, 'this is the island, and this way went my friend of long ago—wounded, too!"

"I landed, and with cocked revolver in hand proceeded stealthily along the path. Presently I came to an open marsh, where thousands of ducks and web-footed creatures of many sorts were feeding. Here and there I saw snares and odd looking traps for taking the feathered creatures, and farther on, the path having led me into the wood and to higher ground again, I came to as fantastic a habitation as fancy ever conceived. It seemed a sort of huge bird cage, with walls woven of yellow cane, and set thick with birds' wings.

"You may well believe that my heart hammered hard as I crept warily around this lair of crime-engendered insanity. A definite intention or clear scheme of action was not mine at the moment. More than that I hungered, with an appetite sharpened by years of starving bitterness, to stamp utterly out of existence this man who had blasted my life; beyond that I had a vague notion of somehow getting evidence with which to clear my reputation.

"Noiselessly I lifted myself when I gained the wall of the strange structure, and peered thru a slit in the plaited cane. A pitiful and shocking spectacle met my view. A kind of hammock hung across a part of the room, and all the interior of the walls seemed covered with splendid, many-colored bird wings. There were odd, rustic chairs, a rude table, and other curious things that insanity might have contrived.

"But the man! He was kneeling before a chair, with wild eyes and such a face! God spare me such another sight! His left arm was severed at the elbow; the severed portion lay upon the table, a crimsoned knife lay upon the floor. Obviously he had amputated the arm where my bullet had shattered it; how he stanched the arterial flow I do not know. He was praying, not to God, but to his wife, whose life he had taken. And his words! They were surely the most appealing things ever wrung out of a human heart. All my rage and hunger for revenge fell flat in me. Tho man had not been able to pronounce punishment upon this violator of universal law, Nature, with an unfailing equity, had pushed him down from the human plane he had forfeited, and made him one with beasts. His abasement was inexpressible. A sense of the suffering he must have passed thru to reach this deplorable plight came upon me, and, melting with sudden compassion, I sprang to the door and called his name.

"No language that I might summon could wholly picture the scene that followed. He leaped and drew back, quivering with terror. 'Deadman, go to your grave!' he shouted. "I have suffered enough! Why need you hunt me down? Isn't it enough that she should follow me with that red gap in her neck?'

"He stood against the wall, the splendid bird wings above and about him, his frame writhing and crouching, his features working ghastly. I put out my hands toward him and tried to speak my compassion, when with a cry he bounded past me out the door, and fled straight and blindly outward into the morass. I ran to the edge, and a great cloud of marsh birds flew upward with a roar, their breasts gleaming white in the sunshine. Below them I saw the man go down in the water and ooze, his wild face toward me. In a moment all that remained was the birds, circling to settle again, and bubbles blinking like dying eyes where the man went down."

The "hobo" got up and moved toward the bundle lying at the root of the tree. With a sigh I stared at the ground. "It is a wild story," I said. "Pardon me if I say I find it hard to believe."

Without a word he brought a round object and unrolled it from a covering of oilcloth and leadfoil before me. I sprang up in amazement. It was the severed forearm and hand of a man!

"That is what was left lying on the table in the swamp," he said. "Do you see what is tattooed on the arm? 'I killed my wife. J. W. B.,' and here on the third finger of the hand is his seal ring, with his initials, 'J. W. B.,' cut in the stone! With this I expect to prove my innocence. Now, I have come to the object of all these words, the 'pretty penny' you mentioned. I need fifty dollars to get quickly to my destination, that justice at last may be done me. You see my pitiful case; do I appeal to you in vain?"

"Wrap up the terrible thing!" I said, with a shudder. "In what town was the original crime committed, and what is your name?"

"In Springfield. My name is Paul Bethune," he answered.

I drew out my pocketbook and handed him twenty dollars, leaving myself but a bit of change.

"Less than half of that will pay your fare to Springfield," I said, nodding toward the bill in his fingers.

For answer he grasped my hand and wrung it, his lips working, his eyes glistening. Seemingly he dared not trust himself to speak lest he should burst out crying. Hurriedly rolling his traps together he drew the bundle under his arm and started down the path toward the highway. Suddenly he turned. "Watch the newspapers of Springfield," he said. "When I arrive at home there will be a sensation. Good-by."

Months have now passed and the press of Springfield has made no reference to the vindication of my remarkable tramp. I have questioned if I heard aright the name of his native town. There is a Springfield in Illinois, in Massachusetts, in Missouri, in Iowa, in fact in numerous States. Which Springfield did he mean?

I have wondered if his strange story was not simply part of a scheme to get sympathy and money. But there was the amputated arm! How did he come by that? Possibly he liked the freedom of being a tramp so well that he never returned home. Who knows?

Concluding

The Kiss of the Silent Death

By Charles Edmonds Walk

What Has Gone Before

FERRIS, a young lawyer, acquires a poison ring upon his father's death, and puts it away among his papers. Six years later, he receives a wonderful diamond. A young lady comes to his office as a stenographer and admits that she is Steve Willets' daughter. Willets is a notorious criminal, and a day or so after the girl's advent in Ferris' office, escapes from prison. In the meantime the girl has been in communication with some mysterious person in the far East, who is on his way to Los Angeles. The day of his arrival, he disappears completely. Struber, a detective, calls at Ferris' office to learn what he knows about a mysterious stranger who had disappeared from a hotel. Ferris denies any knowledge of him. In the meantime, Ferris is kidnaped, searched, thrown from an automobile on a country road and returns to his rooms at the club to find that they have been ransacked. He and Struber go to his office and find Willets dead on the floor beside his safe, with the stamp of the ring on his hand. Ferris calls in a diamond expert who places a value on the diamond and recalls some of its history. The record points back to a man called Willets. At the office Ferris shows her the jade ring, and learns that she has a mark on her chest which corresponds with the ideograph on the ring. Struber goes to the Fox home to see the ivory box and finds Mrs. Fox overcome by chloroform from which she dies later. Before this she tells some more of Lois' strange history. The ivory is gone. In the meantime the gray automobile still pursues Ferris. Struber finds out it is Hardwick's machine, carrying two private detectives. Ferris decides to investigate his father's papers. Thru his father's papers, Ferris learns about the Sylvester expedition into Tibet, the birth of a daughter to Mrs. Sylvester and the connection of Lao Wing Fu with this party. Lao Wing Fu is "boss" of the Los Angeles Chinatown, and calls upon Ferris to get the ring. Ferris promises to give it to him in exchange for needed information. The Chinaman promises to produce Strang with a note which Ferris writes, but instead kidnaps Lois with it. Ferris gets a mysterious message. Ferris is spirited away by a Chinese ivory carver, along an unknown road, where he engages in a fight with a number of Chinese and meets Struber and the mysterious Strang. Lois is rescued from a Chinese garden colony after the tattoo-mark is taken off her throat. Ferris declares his love for her, but she gives him no satisfaction.

This story began in No. 7, the Ledger dated Feb. 15. Back copies may be obtained thru this office, our agents or from newsdealers.

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CHAPTER XXVI.

LOIS' SUPREME MOMENT.

"WHAT else happened?" I asked, with what I tried to make only a natural show of interest.

"The chief things center in the story Lao tried to tell me but never finished. The important points, as nearly as I could gather them, are these:

"He claimed that the ring belonged to him, and that he must recover it to maintain his prestige in what I understood to be some sort of Chinese secret society. He tried to impress upon me its importance—the society's, I mean—its antiquity, and a lot more that I'm not clear about. Besides, I was not much interested in his explanations.

"Then he claimed that the diamond was his. He seemed at first to think I had it, and when he became convinced that I hadn't, that I couldn't get it for him and wouldn't if I could, he seemed disappointed and chagrined. I declared, tho, that if it really belonged to him and he could establish his right to it, you would give it to him without bother or fuss.

"He smiled skeptically, then for a moment his eyes rested upon me with a peculiar look. It gave me a strange, weird feeling of being somebody else—of trying to remember things that were in some one else's mind; but the memories were gone before I could see them plainly. It was like looking thru a veil, or trying to make our faces dimly seen thru a swirling cloud of smoke. The same thing happened this afternoon when he called at the office."

"I remember," I told her. "It was when he passed you in the doorway."

"You noticed, then! I tried to brush the veil away. But right away the queer feeling was gone."

"The villain was trying to hypnotize you, confound him!" I angrily exclaimed. "Go on, please. I am profoundly interested."

"There isn't much more to tell. While we were talking Chinamen were coming and going thru the room, in the silent, unobtrusive way they have; but they didn't seem to notice us. There must have been a score or more about the place.

"But pretty soon we were interrupted by an excited babble outside. Lao Wing Fu abruptly broke off what he was saying and listened with a startled air. Next several Chinamen burst into the room, and what followed was pretty much all confusion. They jabbered and gesticulated in an agitated way, and Lao Wing Fu seemed to be trying to calm them. He was the only one who remained cool, but I could see that he was worried.

"Presently he stepped away from the rest and seemed to be debating something in his mind. In a little while resolution came to him.

"He returned to where I sat watching and told me that he knew about my tattoo-mark. He dumfounded me by bluntly asking me if I wouldn't like to have it removed. I rose from my chair in alarm. I indignantly told him no, and demanded to be taken back to town at once. This impudence after his uniform courtesy and politeness made me for the first time doubt him.

"He regarded me a while, then said: 'I regret that you do not fall in with my desires in this respect, Miss Fox, and I see that you will be stubborn. I have no time to explain or argue or try to convince you. I am sorry because you are a lady and I am a gentleman. But I will state a fact neither your nor I can alter—that symbol on your bosom has to be erased tonight, here and now.'

"I stared at him wildly, unable to credit what I heard.

"'The means are at hand,' he went on. 'If you acquiesce, you will suffer neither discomfort or pain; there will be no shock to your sensibilities, for an American woman will do the little that is requisite—just you and she alone in this room. Will you consent?'

"I was frightened now, of course; but I was enraged, too. I don't recall just what I said, but I gave that cheeky Chinaman a piece of my mind. He clapped his hands twice. Two Chinamen seized me and bore me fighting and scratching into another room whose walls were lined with tiers of bunks. There were no windows—only the door thru which we had come, and one other which was opened once or twice, disclosing a glimpse of the stars. A little wick thrust thru a cork and floating in a common tumbler of oil afforded the only light.

"But I could scream; and I did until a third Chinaman clapped a hand over my mouth. Then they forced me down upon a stool near the spark of light, Lao stood looking on. He had the nerve to say: 'You see, Miss Fox, how unpleasant you are making it. This has to be done, so why not submit to something that cannot harm you and that any normal young lady would want to have done?'

"I was so outraged and indignant that I would have flown at him if I'd been free.

"Then that awful woman! Her face all at once bent over me. She loosened my collar and exposed the death sign. But she was half scared to death herself. Her hand trembled so that she spilled the vile stuff she was dabbing on my throat all over herself. I know how it burns, for I couldn't feel the needle pricking me, and she handled it awkwardly, too."

The episode was so outrageous as scarcely to be credible. My blood boiled; I could hardly contain myself. I swore under my breath.

"They'll be made to pay for it!" I hotly averred.

"I hope so," Lois echoed my sentiment. She pursued:

"About the time she was thru I got my chance. The Chinaman whose hand was gagging me forgot himself an instant, and in that instant my teeth came together on one of his fingers. He tore himself loose with a shriek, hurling the others aside and sending the table holding the dim light crashing against the bunks. For a second everything was noisy confusion. The place was pitch dark. But somehow I got outside and went plunging thru the dark, screaming at the top of my voice. You know the rest."

Only a minute or two more, and we drew up at Mrs. Fleming's. A hush fell upon us, and we quite suddenly became aware of the profound silence that brooded over the city. My watch had been rendered useless by my own vigorous encounter, but Struber informed us that it was past three.

"How dreadful!" murmured Lois in a shocked tone, nervously trying to remove the last traces of her adventurous night.

As the machine moved away, Struber added:

"Strang and I'll be with yuh some time during the day—soon as we get up."

When we were alone on the walk together, with a recollection of the numerous rebuffs I had met during our ride still tingling in my mind, I hesitated, unwilling to leave Lois so abruptly. It was past three o'clock, too. But in a decisive way she put an end to my irresolution. Pausing with one foot on the first step, she looked back and extended a hand to me.

"Come with me," she invited in a low voice. "We will have the parlor to ourselves. Mrs. Fleming can think what she wants to."

Thru the half-drawn curtains an all-night light in the front room shone. I took the outstretched hand in mine, and we went up the steps together. We would have afforded a remarkable spectacle, had there been any eye to see; both of us hatless, torn and disheveled, but still borne up and stimulated by the excitement of what we had undergone so recently.

There was something in Lois' attitude that mystified and eluded me. Despite her graciously sweet and tender mood, something in her bearing warned me to be careful. I felt that the initiative no longer lay with me, but with her. And Heaven knows she was beautiful now! She had assumed the regal splendor of a queen. She was at once firm and decided and soft and yielding; she carried herself haughtily, but did not hide a glimpse of humility and sweetness.

She closed the parlor door, wheeled round and stood with her back against it, regarding me. Her splendid eyes were unnaturally brilliant, like two stars. For a moment her color was high, but gradually it ebbed until her face was as pale as ashes. But her glowing eyes con-

"Her Hand Trembled So That She Spilled the Vile Stuff."

tinued to meet mine steadily, and presently her bosom began to rise and fall in an agitated way.

I longed to rush over and clasp her in my arms; but somehow I knew that never again would I encounter precisely that glorified expression in her countenance, and it would have been sacrilege to break the spell.

Presently she walked up to me and placed her hands upon my shoulders. Her eyes were nearly upon a level with mine, and I am a tall man.

"Brice," she said in a voice of wonderful softness, "it would be idiotic to pretend that I don't know—now, when I am at once the happiest and the wretchedest girl alive." With an impetuous movement, she laid her two palms upon my cheeks and held my face steady.

"You have told me tonight that you love me," she continued in the same rich, thrilling voice. "I want to hear you say it again—here—in the light—while I am looking into your eyes."

I gazed into depth beyond measureless depth of those twin wells of purity that met mine to unwaveringly. Words retreat from and evade me when I try to describe to myself what I saw there. By and by the long, dark lashes fluttered, then lowered and hid them.

I swept her up into my arms.

Some minutes later I was seated in one of Mrs. Fleming's state chairs. Lois stood pensively beside me. It all seemed so wonderful, so incredible, that I could not all at once realize such happiness as being mine. I felt her hand fall gently upon my head; her fingers toyed idly with my hair.

"Boy," she said, "you promised to listen. Now, then—keep your word!"

"I always shall to you," I assured her.

"Do you realize what a dreadful thing has come upon us tonight?"

I glanced up quickly, alarmed by a portentous note in her voice. She went on, her lovely eyes meeting mine wistfully:

"In referring to a life crisis so unsurpassingly splendid and intense that mere words can not give the faintest glimmer of an idea about it, I have heard you call it a 'supreme moment.' I like that phrase. It is so rich with meaning. It has stayed with me. Well, this has been my supreme moment." She paused, her eyes darkening and deepening until they were wonderful. Her voice dropped. "But, Boy, do you think I would ever marry you?"

I tried to rise, but the hand upon my head held me back.

"No, no—don't forget. Wait till I'm thru."

"I knew," I nevertheless said, "you had some idiotic quirk in that precious head of yours. But whatever it is, you are mine just the same."

"Supposing, Brice, your brother—if you'd ever had one—or your closest friend, say, should come to you and inform you he was going to marry Steve Willet's daughter. How could you advise him?"

This time I was upon my feet before she could stay me. I was frightened.

"Lois! Do you imagine I even consider that? God knows it never entered my head! I have been forgetting it so constantly that it is as if it weren't so."

"I know. Your attitude is that of the one seeking advice. But try to put yourself in the adviser's place. Come—be honest now—what would the adviser say? What would be his counsel?"

"I don't care a hang what he'd say. Your question is unfair to me and unworthy of yourself. I simply shan't answer it or discuss the subject further."

Her eyes searched my face, then her lips curved in a secret little smile.

"Very well," she said quietly. "We'll never mention it again." In an unaffected way that set my pulses galloping, she held her mouth up to me. "Kiss me once more. . . . Good-by."

"Until I see you at the office, you mean," I amended.

She didn't say what she meant; the cryptic expression remained upon her countenance. When I left I carried with me a vivid memory of it—baffling, inscrutable, the reflection of a deep-laid purpose she meant not to reveal. The longer I thought about it the more troubled I grew. A persistent, pestiferous gnat of doubt began to torment me.

With this fresh annoyance piled upon top of the night's whirlwind of excitement, I never felt less like sleep; so I went to my rooms and discarded the ruined evening clothes for a business suit, selected a soft hat to replace the lost opera-hat, and then started out to walk my nerves into a decent state of calmness.

CHAPTER XXVII.

AN ALARMING PURPOSE IS REVEALED.

THAT morning I saw the city waken. Watched it progress thru all the stages, from the brooding silence of slumber, before the sparrows renew their quarrels and matings, to noisy activity; from darkness, thru the pink opening bud of dawn, to the full white flower of broad day; and a few minutes before six some benign providence guided my wandering feet to my office building.

On this day of days what mysterious, unseen influence operated to urge me there at so unprecedented an hour? From half-past eight to nine was my customary time for arriving; but six o'clock—I had never done such a thing before! And if I had arrived only a few minutes later—at six-thirty, say—I would have been late, and this story would have an ending so different from the one it has that I shudder even now to think of it.

I had been walking ever since parting from Lois, in the vain hope that the chill air of morning would cool the fever in my veins. I was tired, jaded, haggard; but interest in the day's promised developments had revived in a measure, and already I was beginning impatiently to hope that Strang would not be dilatory.

And Lois—would she be on hand at her usual hour? It was indeed a good deal to expect from her powers of endurance; but after all that had happened she must not be allowed to miss the culmination of our adventures, the denouement of the mystery that had intruded into our lives.

What had she meant by that secret smile? What hidden purpose did it portend? The maggot of disquiet still gnawed at my brain.

An elevator-boy, only half awake, contemplated my unseasonable appearance with surprise.

"Gee, Mr. Ferris," he saluted me, "this must be your busy day!"

"I expect it to be," I told him.

A few seconds later I was startled at finding my office door not only unlocked, but a trifle ajar—barely enough to emit a thread of light. The discovery gave me a distinct shock. The circumstance,

"That's the Young Lady Herself—Miss Marian Sylvester, of Yalung, Tibet."

whatever the cause, was irregular. Rarely if ever was the door unlocked before eight of a morning.

What fresh villainy was afoot?

Prudence suggested that I would better not undertake an investigation without the supporting presence of someone else; but this recommendation of timidity was promptly dismissed. Besides, except a possible elevator-boy, it was more than likely I could find nobody in the entire building above the street floor. I was not, moreover, proud of the figure I had so far cut in every crisis.

However, with the memory of what had recently happened beyond this same door fresh in mind, candor obliges me to confess that I did not at once enter. I had to summon all my resolution before I pushed open the door and sent an apprehensive look skirting round the room.

There were just two things I noticed as being out of place or unusual; a fresh-looking traveling bag stood upon Lois' typewriter desk, and the communicating door between the two rooms was also partially open.

Again I had to muster up courage before I could tiptoe half the room's length and peep in at the aperture. I halted upon the threshold, prey to a mixture of emotions that ranged all the way from astonishment to tenderness.

There was a shabby old leather-seated chair, remarkably comfortable, which my stenographers had always used when taking dictations. It stood facing my own swivel-chair across the wide table-desk, and until Lois' advent had been something of an eyesore. But it had been consecrated by her use of it, and I would not have discarded it now for worlds. So much had happened since first she sat in that old chair!

And at this very instant she was seated in it. Her right arm was extended straight across the desk so that one little gloved hand lay upon my blotting-pad. The other arm rested upon the desk, and with that hand she was holding a handkerchief to her eyes. Instantaneously I took in the details of her appearance. Since I left Mrs. Fleming's she had changed to the stylish tailored costume I had seen her in; she had on a different hat, modest, as what is appropriate in women's headgear goes, but still distinctively "smart" and, of course, becoming, like everything else about her. She wore a veil, which just now was pushed up. I could not see much of her face, being nearly directly behind her, and some seconds passed before I gathered the significance of her attitude.

My regard wandered back to the hand upon the blotting-pad. It is remarkable how expressive the human hand may be. Lois' was a beautiful hand, the long, delicately tapering sort that is said to denote an artistic temperament. At first it lay listlessly half open, conveying to me an impression of infinite weariness, both of the flesh and the spirit; but in the brief time I stood watching it, trying to make up my mind how to announce my presence without startling her, it closed suddenly and convulsively and quivered with the abnormal tension of the muscles. Then I knew she was crying.

She was crying softly, for hers was an undemonstrative nature; but the spasmodic clinching of the hand upon the blotting-pad was eloquently expressive of the tempest of emotion that raged in her heart. I knew it must be truly terrible to overcome her habitual poise and self-control even to this extent.

Involuntarily I started forward.

"Lois," I called softly. And as she started up quickly it was to find herself encircled by my arms. "My darling girl—what does this mean?"

But even while asking the question I knew what it meant. All at once I divined the origin of everything in her conduct of the earlier hours that had been inexplicable to me. The fight between her inclination and a noble, if mistaken notion of duty to me; the impulsive abandonment of herself to the passion that burned in her own heart; the infinite tenderness with which she had said good-by, all were now accounted for—she had resolved to run away, to take herself out of my life. My heart was overflowing.

She was scarcely startled. She regarded me with tear-dimmed eyes.

"Brice," she said in a voice listless with despondency and discouragement, "of all mornings, why did you have to choose this one to intrude upon me here?"

I tried to answer lightly, holding her close to me and smiling into her distressed eyes.

"Have you made a practice of coming here so early and crying on my desk?" I asked. At once, tho, I soberly added: "But I know what you mean, sweetheart; I understand a good deal at this moment that has puzzled and grieved me. Thank God for having brought me here in time to prevent you from doing anything so foolish as you have been contemplating."

My glance went back to the blotting-pad. Where her hand had been lay an envelope addressed to me, upon top of it her key to the office door.

"But you can't prevent me," she protested with sudden intensity, "you can't—you can't! My mind is made up; nothing can stop me now. I know——" She broke off and hid her face upon my shoulder. "Oh, why did you have to come!" she moaned. "My way was best. You would not listen to me last night. This only makes it so much harder—so bitter, bitter hard."

I pressed her head to me and gently caressed the sunny hair, whose rich, shimmering abundance neither hat nor veil could entirely confine. She did not resist; but there was a hopeless, apathetic note in her voice, a drooping dullness in her bearing, that gave me a pang of alarm. Endearments and caresses alike had lost their potency to touch her now. It would be no easy task to shake her determination.

It would be useless to recount at length all the arguments I brought to bear to overcome her misguided resolve; she met them one and all in the same lifeless tone and dispirited manner; but the resolve remained steadfast. She talked with a frankness, an utter freedom from reserve, that fanned my passion to white heat and increased my anxiety a thousandfold. She was determined to go away somewhere where I could never see her again. Could a situation have been more exasperatingly hopeless?

"Never in my life have I received a genuine love-letter," she told me when I betrayed my curiosity about the one upon the blotting-pad; "never have I written anything that even pretended to be one—until this morning. This is my first love-letter, Boy, and I wanted to write it to you, seated here in one of the very few spots that are hallowed for me by any tender or sacred memories."

I still have that letter; I shall always keep it. It too is sacred, much too sacred to transcribe any part of it here; but I venture to say no doting lover ever before received such burning testimony of his loved one's love for him. Dear girl, she overlooked nothing. It even contained, anticipating my worry, a statement of her finances, and the assurance that an acceptable stenographer would be on hand to take her place without inconvenience to me. My heart throbbed in my throat as I read it.

Another fragment of our long, grievous argument is recorded because it clearly sets forth the position she had taken and which she clung to with the tenacity of a Christian martyr to his faith.

Said Lois: "At Mrs. Fleming's I know you thought I was bold and forward, but you will understand now and forgive. I told you it was my supreme moment. It was. I just had to have that consecration of our love to carry away with me, to uphold and support me, to inspire me with ideals that are worthy of it, and to strengthen me in the effort to live up to them."

"And still you can deliberately go away from me"—I was pleading desperately—"thrust me out of your life. Think, dear heart—think! Stop and consider what a cold, starved, hollow mockery of a love it soon will become! Ashes—mould—mildew—it's worse than death!"

"Oh, Boy, don't believe I am cold, harsh, unfeeling; for indeed, indeed, I'm not! My heart aches for you. I am not putting you out of my life; that would be impossible. I am taking myself away from you.

"Listen, Brice, I have always been a pretty level-headed sort of person, not given much to dreaming dreams are seeing visions. But I know what your ambitions are. Mine would be a poor, weak mockery of a love in very truth if I couldn't divine them. And I have looked ahead into the future. The higher you rise, the more honored your position, just that much more intolerable will our relationship grow to be. I shall be more severely critised; my antecedents will be dragged out into the open and the spotlight kept constantly upon them. Your advancement will correspondingly increase the humiliation and embarrassment of having for your wife the daughter of a murderer, a thief, a creature whose very name is synonymous with all that is base, ignoble, mean, wicked and cruel.

"If you can't see it, thank God that I can. If you were destined to live in obscurity the rest of your days, it would not matter so much. But you are not going to live in obscurity. Already, young as you are, your name is being mentioned for a place on the bench.

"So, dear Boy, try to realize this—you can never raise the daughter of Steve Willets up to your level, but she can hold you down to hers. A wife with a stain upon her name is a worse affliction for a successful man than a cancer."

I was in despair. Pleadings, threats, tenderness, sternness, alike left her unmoved. The lances of my most eloquent pointed arguments shattered against the armor of her resolve; it remained fixed, solid, stubborn, a huge impregnable reality, like a mountain of granite. And all the while her splendid eyes were glorified with a light of love. She made no attempt to conceal it, nor did she manifest an inclination to resort to those instinctive coquetries which harass, but

(Continued on Page 19.)

Sixth Installment of

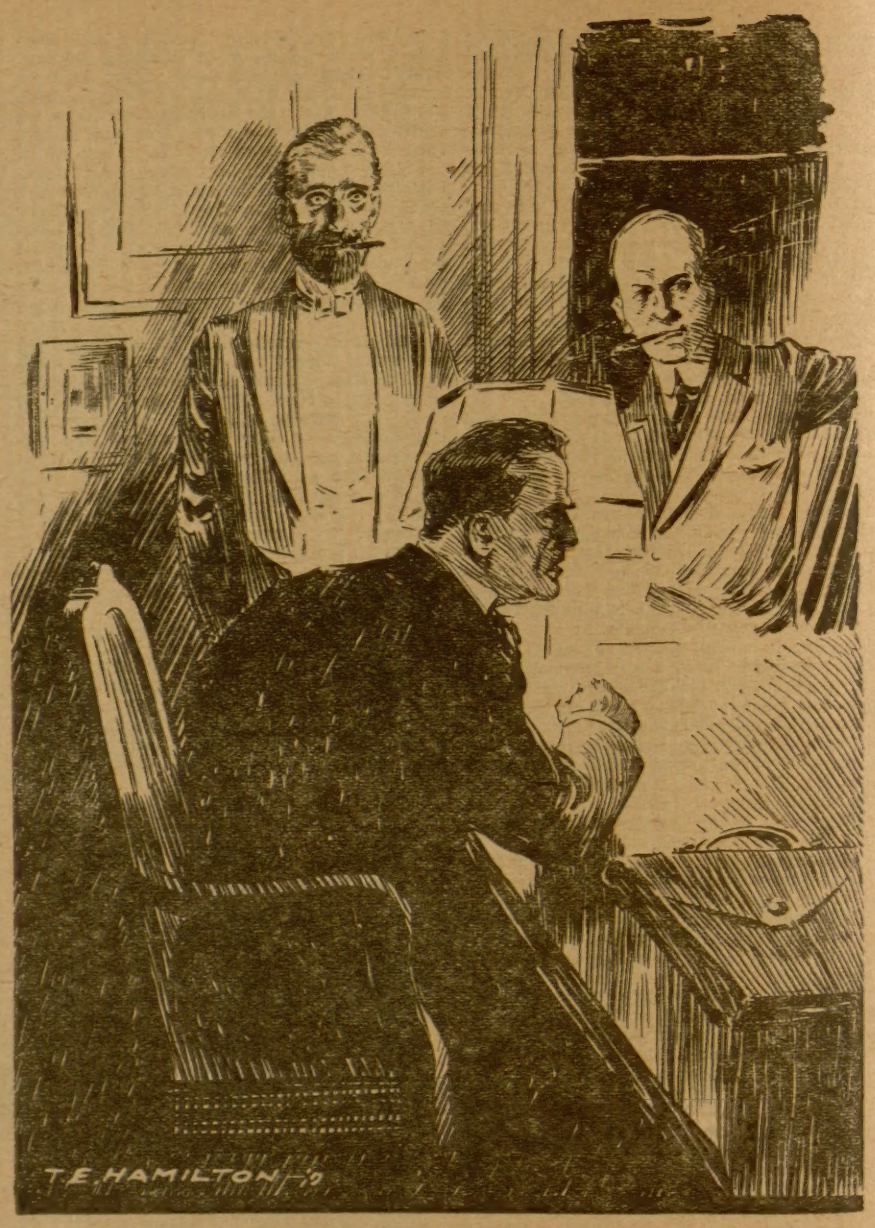
The Third Degree

By Chas. Klein and Arthur Hornblow

Read This First

BECAUSE of his escapades at college, culminating in his marriage to a waitress, Howard Jeffries, Jr., is disowned by his father. In an effort to secure some money for an investment, he plans to call on Robert Underwood, who had introduced him to his wife. Underwood, an old fiance of Howard's stepmother, Alicia, has taken advantage of their renewed friendship to prey on society. She finally awakens to his rascality and forbids him further to enter her home. He sends her a note saying that unless she gives him assistance he will be ruined and will commit suicide. She also plans to call on Underwood. Howard becomes intoxicated and falls asleep. Alicia visits Underwood and refuses to continue her friendship with him. He shoots himself after she leaves. Howard is awakened by the shot and is arrested by Captain Clinton, notorious for his Third Degree methods. After a six hour grilling, Howard signs a confession. Annie, Howard's wife, does not believe him guilty and goes to enlist the help of Jeffries, Sr. He offers to pay for the defense if she will get a divorce from Jeffries, Jr. Annie promises on condition that he interest himself personally in the case, but this he refuses to do and she leaves to take up the fight once more. Judge Brewster, after calling Annie into his office to tell her that he does not want her to frequent his office, is won over by the girl's persistency and takes the case, against the direct commands of Howard, Sr.

This story began in No. 8, the Ledger for Feb. 22. Back copies may be obtained thru newsdealers, our agents or from office of publication.



"You Convinced Him He Was Guilty, Tho It Turned Out He Was in Prison."

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CHAPTER XVI.

ALICIA CONFESSES.

"NOW, my dear young woman," said Judge Brewster, when his astonished head clerk had withdrawn, "if we are going to set your husband free we must get to work, and you must help me."

His visitor looked up eagerly.

"I'll do anything in my power," she said quickly. "What can I do?"

"Well—first of all," said the lawyer with some hesitation. "I want you to see a certain lady and to be exceedingly nice to her."

"Lady?" echoed Annie, surprised. "What lady?"

"Mrs. Howard Jeffries, Senior," he replied slowly.

"Howard's stepmother!" she ejaculated.

A clerk entered and handed his employer a card. The lawyer nodded and said in an undertone:

"Show her in." Turning round again, he went on: "Yes—Howard's stepmother. She's out there now. She wants to see you. She wishes to be of service to you. Now, you must conciliate her. She may be of great use to us."

Annie's face expressed considerable doubt.

"Perhaps so," she said, "but the door was slammed in my face when I called to see her."

"That's nothing," answered the judge. "She probably knows nothing about it. In any case, please remember that she is my client——"

She bowed her head and murmured obediently:

"I'll remember."

The door of the office opened and Alicia entered. She stopped short on seeing who was there, and an awkward pause followed. Judge Brewster introduced them.

"Mrs. Jeffries, may I present Mrs. Howard, Junior?"

Alicia bowed stiffly and somewhat haughtily. Annie remained self-possessed and on the defensive. Addressing the banker's wife, the lawyer said:

"I told Mrs. Howard that you wished to speak to her." After a pause he added: "I think, perhaps, I'll leave you together. Excuse me."

He left the office and there was another embarrassing silence. Annie waited for Mrs. Jeffries to begin. Her attitude suggested that she expected something unpleasant and was fully prepared for it. At last Alicia broke the silence:

"You may think it strange that I have asked for this interview," she began, "but you know, Annie——" Interrupting herself, she asked: "You don't mind my calling you Annie, do you?"

The young woman smiled.

"I don't see why I should. It's my name and we're relatives—by marriage." There was an ironical ring in her voice as she went on: "Relatives! It seems funny, doesn't it, but we don't pick and choose our relatives. We must take them as they come."

Alicia made an effort to appear conciliatory.

"As we are—what we are—let's try to make the best of it."

"Make the best of it?' Annie echoed. "God knows I'm willing, but I've had mighty little encouragement, Mrs. Jeffries. When I called to see you the other day, to beg you to use your influence with Mr. Jeffries, 'not at home' was handed to me by the liveried footman and the door was slammed in my face. Ten minutes later you walked out to your carriage and were driven away."

"I knew nothing of this—believe me," murmured Alicia apologetically.

"It's what I got just the same," said the other dryly. Quickly she went on: "But I'm not complaining, understand—I'm not complaining. Only I did think that at such a time one woman might have held out a helping hand to another."

Alicia held up her hand protestingly.

"How could I?" she exclaimed. "Now, be reasonable. You are held responsible for Howard's present position."

"Yes—by the police," retorted Annie grimly, "and by a couple of yellow journals. I didn't think you'd believe all the gossip and scandal that's been printed about me. I didn't believe what was said about you."

Alicia started and changed color.

"What do you mean?" she exclaimed haughtily. "What was said about me?"

"Well, it has been said that you married old Jeffries for his money and his social position."

"'Old Jeffries!'" protested Alicia indignantly. "Have you no respect for your husband's father?"

"Not a particle," answered the other coolly, "and I never will have till he acts like a father. I only had one interview with him and it finished him with me for all time. He ain't a father—he's a fish."

"A fish!" exclaimed Alicia, scandalized at such lese majeste.

Annie went on recklessly:

"Yes—a cold-blooded——"

"But surely," interrupted Alicia, "you respect his position—his——"

"No, m'm; I respect a man because he behaves like a man, not because he lives in a marble palace on Riverside Drive."

Alicia looked pained. This girl was certainly impossible.

"But surely," she said, "you realized that when you married Howard you—you made a mistake—to say the least?"

"Yes, that part of it has been made pretty plain. It was a mistake—his mistake—my mistake. But now it's done and it can't be undone. I don't see why you can't take it as it is and—and——"

She stopped short and Alicia completed the sentence for her:

"——and welcome you into our family——"

"Welcome me? No, ma'am. I'm not welcome and nothing you or your set could say would ever make me believe that I was welcome. All I ask is that Howard's father do his duty by his son."

"I do not think—pardon my saying so," interrupted Alicia stiffly, "that you are quite in a position to judge of what constitutes Mr. Jeffries' duties to his son."

"Perhaps not. I only know what I would do—what my father would have done—what any one would do if they had a spark of humanity in them. But they do say that after three generations of society life red blood turns into blue."

Alicia turned to look out of the window. Her face still averted she said:

"What is there to do? Howard has acknowledged his guilt—any sacrifices we may make will be thrown away."

Annie eyed her companion with contempt. Her voice quivering with indignation, she burst out:

"What is there to do! Try and save him, of course. Must we sit and do nothing because things look black? Ah! I wasn't brought up that way. No, ma'am, I'm going to make a fight!"

"It's useless," murmured Alicia, shaking her head.

"Judge Brewster doesn't think so," replied the other calmly.

The banker's wife gave a start of surprise. Quickly she demanded:

"You mean that Judge Brewster has encouraged you to—to——"

"He's done more than encourage me—God bless him!—he's going to take up the case."

Alicia was so thunderstruck that for a moment she could find no answer.

"What!" she exclaimed, "without consulting Mr. Jeffries?"

She put her handkerchief to her face to conceal her agitation. Could it be possible that the judge was going to act, after all, in defiance of her husband's wishes? If that were true, what would become of her? Concealment would be no longer possible. Discovery of her clandestine visit to Underwood's apartment that fatal night must come. Howard might still be the murderer. Underwood might not have committed suicide, but her visit to his rooms at midnight would become known. Judge Brewster was not the man to be deterred by difficulties once he took up a case. He would see the importance of finding the mysterious woman who went secretly to Underwood's rooms that night of the tragedy.

"He consulted only his own feelings," went on Annie. "He believes in Howard, and he's going to defend him."

Alicia looked at her anxiously as if trying to read what might be in her mind. Indifferently she went on:

"The papers say there was a quarrel about you, that you and Mr. Underwood were too friendly. They implied that Howard was jealous. Is this true?"

"It's all talk," cried Annie indignantly—"nothing but scandal—lies! There's not a word of truth in it. Howard never had a jealous thought of me—and as for me—why—I've always worshiped the ground he walked on. Didn't he sacrifice everything for my sake? Didn't he quarrel with his father for me? Didn't he marry me? Didn't he try to educate and make a lady of me? My God!—do you suppose I'd give a man like that cause for jealousy? What do the newspapers care? They print cruel statements that cut into a woman's heart, without giving it a thought, without knowing or caring whether it's true or not, as long as it interests and amuses their readers. You—you don't really believe I'm the cause of his misfortunes, do you?"

Alicia shook her head as she answered kindly:

"No, I don't. Believe me, I don't. You were right when you said that at such a time as this one woman should stand by another. I'm going to stand by you. Let me be your friend, let me help you." Extending her hand, she said: "Will you?"

Annie grasped the proffered hand. It was the first that had been held out to her in her present trouble. A lump rose in her throat. Much affected, she said:

"It's the first kind word that——" She stopped and looked closely for a moment at Alicia. Then she went on:

"It's the queerest thing, Mrs. Jeffries, but it keeps coming into my mind. Howard told me that while he was at Underwood's that dreadful night he thought he heard your voice. It must have been a dream, of course, yet he thought he was sure of it. Your voice—that's queer, isn't it? Why—what's the matter?"

Alicia had grown deathly pale and staggered against a chair. Annie ran to her aid, thinking she was ill.

"It's nothing—nothing!" stammered Alicia, recovering herself.

Fearing she had said something to hurt her feelings, Annie said sympathetically:

"I haven't said anything—anything out of the way—have I? If I have I'm sorry—awfully sorry. I'm afraid—I—I've been very rude and you've been so kind!"

"No, no!" interrupted Alicia quickly. "You've said nothing—done nothing—you've had a great deal to bear—a great deal to bear. I understand that perfectly." Taking her companion's hand in hers, she went on, "Tell me, what do they say about the woman who went to see Robert Underwood the night of the tragedy?"

"The police can't find her—we don't know who she is." Confidently she went on: "But Judge Brewster will find her. We have a dozen detectives searching for her. Captain Clinton accused me of being the woman—you know he doesn't like me."

The banker's wife was far too busy thinking of the number of detectives employed to find the missing witness to pay attention to the concluding sentence Anxiously she demanded:

"Supposing the woman is found, what can she prove? What difference will it make?"

"All the difference in the world," replied Annie. "She is a most important witness." Firmly she went on: "She must be found. If she didn't shoot Robert Underwood, she knows who did."

"But how can she know?" argued Alicia. "Howard confessed that he did it himself. If he had not confessed it would be different."

"He did not confess," replied the other calmly. "Mrs. Jeffries—he never confessed. If he did, he didn't know what he was saying."

Alicia was rapidly losing her self-possession.

"Did he tell you that?" she gasped.

Annie nodded.

"Yes. Dr. Bernstein says the police forced it out of his tired brain. I made Howard go over every second of his life that night from the time he left me to the moment he was arrested. There wasn't a harsh word between them." She stopped short and looked with alarm at Alicia, who had turned ashen white. "Why, what's the matter? You're pale as death—you——"

Alicia could contain herself no longer. Her nerves were on the point of giving way. She felt that if she could not confide her secret to some one she must go mad. Pacing the floor, she cried:

"What am I to do? What am I to do? I believed Howard guilty. Why shouldn't I? I had no reason to doubt his own confession! Every one believed it—his own father included. Why should I

doubt it. But I see it all now! Underwood must have shot himself as he said he would!"

Annie started. What did Mrs. Jeffries mean? Did she realize the tremendous significance of the words she was uttering?

"As he said he would?" she repeated slowly.

"Yes," said Alicia weakly.

Annie bounded forward and grasped her companion's arm. Her face flushed, almost unable to speak from suppressed emotion, she cried:

"Ah! I begin to understand. You knew Robert Underwood? Howard knows your voice—he heard you—talking to him——. Oh, Mrs. Jeffries! Are you the woman who visited his apartment that night?"

The banker's wife bowed her head and collapsed on a chair.

"Yes," she murmured in a low tone.

Annie looked at her in amazement.

"Why didn't you come forward at once?" she cried. "Think of the pain which you might have spared us!"

Alicia covered her face with her handkerchief. She was crying now.

"The disgrace—the disgrace!" she moaned.

"Disgrace!" echoed Annie, stupefied. Indignantly, she went on: "Disgrace—to you? But what of me and Howard?"

Alicia looked up.

"Can't you realize what it means to be associated with such a crime?" she wailed.

"Disgrace!" cried Annie contemptuously. "What is disgrace when a human life is at stake?"

"It seemed so useless," moaned Alicia—"a useless sacrifice in the face of Howard's confession. Of course—if I'd known—if I'd suspected what you tell me—I'd have come forward and told everything—no matter at what cost." Tearfully she added: "Surely you realize the position it puts me in?"

A new light shone in Annie's eyes. What was this woman's misery to her? Her duty was to the poor fellow who was counting the hours until she could set him free. His stepmother deserved no mercy. Utterly selfish, devoid of a spark of humanity, she would have left them both to perish in order to protect herself from shame and ridicule. Her face was set and determined as she said calmly:

"It must be done now."

"Yes," murmured Alicia in a low tone that sounded like a sob. "it must be done now! Oh, if I'd only done it before—if I'd only told Mr. Jeffries the whole truth! You speak of Howard's sufferings. If he didn't do it, he has at least the consciousness of his own innocence, but I—the constant fear of being found out is worse than any hell the imagination can conjure up. I dreaded it—I dread it now—it means disgrace—social ostracism—my husband must know—the whole world will know."

Annie was not listening. Still bewildered, she gazed with the utmost astonishment at her companion. To think that this mysterious woman they had been seeking was Howard's stepmother.

"So you're the missing witness we've all been hunting for!" she said: "I can't believe it even now. How did it happen?"

Alicia explained in short, broken sentences:

"He and I were once engaged. I broke it off when I found him out. After I married Mr. Jeffries I met Underwood again. Foolishly, I allowed the old intimacy to be renewed. He took advantage and preyed on my friends. I forbade him my house. He wrote me a letter in which he threatened to kill himself. I was afraid he meant it—I wanted to prevent him. I went to his rooms that night. I—didn't tell Mr. Jeffries. When the truth is known and I acknowledge that I visited this man—can you see what it means?—what a fuss there'll be? Everybody will put the worst construction on it——"

"Trust them for that!" said Annie grimly. She was sorry for the woman's distress, yet, being only human, she felt a certain sense of satisfaction in seeing her suffer a little of what she had been made to suffer.

"They'll say that I—God knows what they'll say!" went on Alicia distractedly. "My husband will be dragged thru the mire of another public scandal—his social prestige will—oh, I dare not think of it—I know—I know—my duty is to that unfortunate boy. I mustn't think of myself."

"Have you the letter that Mr. Underwood wrote you?" demanded her companion.

"Yes—I've never been able to destroy it. I don't know why I kept it, but thank God I have it!" Moaning, she went on:

"The disgrace!—the disgrace!—it's ruin!—degradation! It's the end of everything!—the end of everything!"

Annie regarded with contempt this poor, weak, wailing creature who lacked the moral courage to do what was merely right. Yet her voice was not unkind as she said:

"I don't want to disgrace you—or ruin you. But what am I to do—tell me, what am I to do?"

"I don't know," moaned her companion helplessly.

"Howard must be saved."

"Yes."

"Will you tell Judge Brewster or shall I?"

"Judge Brewster! Why should he know?" cried Alicia, startled. More composedly and as if resigned to the inevitable, she went on: "Yes, I suppose he must know sooner or later, but, I——"

She broke down again and burst into tears. Annie watched her in silence.

"It's tough—isn't it?" she said sympathetically.

"Yes," sobbed Alicia thru her tears, "it's—it's tough!" Rising, she dried her eyes and said hastily: "Don't say anything now. Give me a few hours. Then I can think what is best to be done."

Annie was about to reply when the office door suddenly opened and Judge Brewster entered. Addressing Alicia, he said:

"Pardon me, Mrs. Jeffries, I hope I haven't kept you waiting." Noticing her agitation and traces of tears, he looked surprised. He made no comment but turned to Annie:

"I have been talking to Dr. Bernstein over the 'phone."

Annie approached him softly and said in a whisper:

"I've told Mrs. Jeffries that you have undertaken Howard's defense."

Judge Brewster smiled at his wealthy client, almost apologetically, Annie thought. Then addressing her, he said:

"Yes, I've been quite busy since I saw you. I have put three of the best detectives we have on the trail of the woman who visited Underwood that night. I don't think the police have been trying very hard to find her. They're satisfied with Howard's confession. But we want her and we'll get her——"

"Oh!" gasped Alicia.

The judge was proceeding to tell of other steps he had taken when the door opened and the head clerk entered, followed by Mr. Jeffries.

"I told Mr. Jeffries that Mrs. Jeffries was here," said the clerk.

"You might have told him that there were two Mrs. Jeffries here," laughed the judge.

The clerk retired and the banker, completely ignoring the presence of his daughter-in-law, turned to his wife and said:

"I regret, my dear, that you should be subjected to these family annoyances."

Judge Brewster came forward and cleared his throat as if preliminary to something important he had to say. Addressing the banker, he said boldly:

"Mr. Jeffries, I have decided to undertake Howard's defense."

His aristocratic client was taken completely by surprise. For a moment he could say nothing, but simply stared at the lawyer as if unable to believe his ears. With an effort, he at last exclaimed:

"Indeed!—Then you will please consider our business relations to have ceased from this moment."

The lawyer bowed.

"As you please," he said suavely.

The banker turned to his wife.

"Alicia—come."

He offered his arm and turned toward the door. Alicia, in distress, looked back at Annie, who nodded reassuringly to her. Judge Brewster rose and, going to the door, opened it. The banker bowed stiffly and said:

"Pray don't trouble. Good morning, sir."

"Good morning, Mr. Jeffries," replied the judge.

As Alicia followed her husband out, she turned and whispered to Annie:

"Come and see me at my home."

When she had disappeared the judge came back into the room and sat down at his desk.

"Well, that's done!" he exclaimed with a sigh of relief. Rummaging for a moment among his papers, he looked up and said with an encouraging smile:

"Now, if you please, we will go over that evidence—bit by bit."

CHAPTER XVII.

JUDGE BREWSTER ACTS.

THE news that Judge Brewster would appear for the defendant at the approaching trial of Howard Jeffries went thru the town like wildfire, and caused an immediate revival in the public interest, which was beginning to slacken for want of hourly stimulation. Rumor said that there had been a complete reconciliation in the Jeffries family, that the banker was now convinced of his son's innocence and was determined to spend a fortune, if necessary, to save him. This and other reports of similar nature were all untrue, but the judge let them pass without contradiction. They were harmless, he chuckled, and if anything, helped Howard's cause.

Meantime, he himself had not been idle. When once he made up his mind to do a thing he was not content with half measures. Night and day he worked on the case, preparing evidence, seeing witnesses and experts, until he had gradually built up a bulwark of defense which the police would find difficult to tear down. Yet he was not wholly reassured as to the outcome until Annie, the day following the interview in his office, informed him breathlessly that she had found the mysterious woman. The judge was duly elated; now it was plain sailing, indeed! There had always been the possibility that Howard's confession to the police was true, that he had really killed Underwood. But now they had found the one important witness, the mysterious woman who was in the apartment a few minutes before the shooting and who was in possession of a letter in which Underwood declared his intention of shooting himself, doubt was no longer possible. Acquittal was a foregone conclusion. So pleased was the judge at Annie's find that he did not insist on knowing the woman's name. He saw that Annie preferred, for some reason, not to give it—even to her legal adviser—and he let her have her way, exacting only that the woman should be produced the instant he needed her. The young woman readily assented. Of course, there remained the "confession," but that had been obtained unfairly, illegally, fraudulently. The next important step was to arrange a meeting at the judge's house at which Dr. Bernstein, the hypnotic expert, would be present and to which should be invited both Captain Clinton and Howard's father. In front of all these witnesses the judge would accuse the police captain of browbeating his prisoner into making an untrue confession. Perhaps the captain could be argued into admitting the possibility of a mistake having been made. If, further, he could be convinced of the existence of documentary evidence showing that Underwood really committed suicide he might be willing to recede from his position in order to protect himself. At any rate it was worth trying. The judge insisted, also, that to this meeting the mysterious woman witness should also come, to be produced at such a moment as the lawyer might consider opportune. Annie merely demanded a few hours' time so she could make the appointment and soon reappeared with a solemn promise that the woman would attend the meeting and come forward at whatever moment called upon.

Three evenings later there was an impressive gathering at Judge Brewster's residence. In the handsomely appointed library on the second floor were seated Dr. Bernstein, Mr. Jeffries and the judge. Each was absorbed in his own thoughts. Dr. Bernstein was puffing at a big black cigar; the banker stared vacantly into space. The judge, at his desk, examined some legal papers. Not a word was spoken. They seemed to be waiting for a fourth man who had not yet arrived.

Presently Judge Brewster looked up and said:

"Gentlemen, I expect Captain Clinton in a few minutes, and the matter will be placed before you."

Mr. Jeffries frowned. It was greatly against his will that he had been dragged to this conference. Peevishly, he said:

"I've no wish to be present at the meeting. You know that and yet you sent for me."

Judge Brewster looked up at him quickly and said quietly yet decisively:

"Mr. Jeffries, it is absolutely necessary that you be present when I tell Captain Clinton that he has either willfully or ignorantly forced your son to confess to having committed a crime of which I am persuaded he is absolutely innocent."

The banker shrugged his shoulders.

"If I can be of service, of course, I—I am only too glad—but what can I say—what can I do?"

"Nothing," replied the judge curtly "But the moral effect of your presence is invaluable." More amiably he went on: "Believe me, Jeffries, I wouldn't have taken this step unless I was absolutely sure of my position. I have been informed that Underwood committed suicide, and tonight evidence confirming this statement is to be placed in my hands. The woman who paid him that mysterious visit just before his death has promised to come here and tell us what she knows. Now, if Captain Clinton can be got to admit the possibility of his being mistaken it means that your son will be free in a few days."

"Who has given you this information?" demanded the banker skeptically.

"Howard's wife," answered the judge quietly. The banker started and the lawyer went on: "She knows who the woman is, and has promised to bring her here tonight with documentary proof of Underwood's suicide."

"You are depending on her?" he sneered.

"Why not?" demanded the judge. "She has more at stake than any of us. She has worked day and night on this case. It was she who aroused Dr. Bernstein's interest and persuaded him to collect the evidence against Captain Clinton."

The banker frowned.

"She is the cause of the whole miserable business," he growled.

The door opened and the butler, en-

(Continued on Page 18)

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The main thing an advertiser wants to do is to tell you plainly just how and why his goods are worthy of your consideration. You can learn a great deal from that alone, because many things you see advertised are the things you buy and use in your regular daily life. By reading the advertisements, you can learn the names and read descriptions of the things that are best and most satisfactory.

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Double Crossed for Gold

By Willard Hawkins

Review of the Story

WITH the advent of Colonel Morningside, president of the Tokyo mine, his friend, Lord Erskin, and Marion Dupont, gold thieves begin a systematic plunder of the mine. Marion is as determined to watch for the thieves as is the Colonel. She goes to the mine with the superintendent and while there the stope in which they are hiding is dynamited; there is an exchange of pistol shots, and Marion discovers Lord Erskin crawling toward her. Both Miss Dupont and Saunders believe Erskin is the "higher up" in the gold robberies. Saunders warns Miss Dupont to watch him. She follows his automobile to a deserted sawmill and discovers him and a Japanese shoveling sand into milk cans. The act in itself is innocent, but she wonders what bearing it has on the robberies. Marion does not tell about this incident, but when Erskin leaves the hotel, she conceals herself in his auto and witnesses how he and Ito, the Japanese, carry the gold into the car to be taken away. After Erskin leaves he discovers her hiding place, and when she can give no motive for wanting to save him, he declares his love for her. To her astonishment, Marion finds herself in his arms, a willing captive.

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CHAPTER X.

THE TRAP.

THE moment of yielding, tho brief, by its very intensity, left Marion nerveless—and immeasureably bewildered. Yet she felt no regret. It had been a moment of awakening—awakening to a new sense of relative values. The great, the overwhelming fact, was love—their love—her love for him, his love for her. Beside it, the detail that he was an outlaw was insignificant. No matter how far apart their temporal views and opinions, they were joined in the eternal.

The man occupied himself with getting the car under way again. Commonplace preoccupations were needed to steady both of them after their dizzy swing into the emotional heights. When he spoke his voice was subdued.

"Marion, will you go away with me tonight?"

"You mean—without even—telling my aunt?"

Conventionality was beginning to assert its interrupted sway. Strange that she should love this man, and yet fear to take the step required. Of course if he went away tonight and escaped he would never be able to come back for her. It must be now or never. But the future——

"Don't you trust me that much, Marion, dear?" he insisted.

"It isn't fair," she countered almost fiercely. "We would be hunted and pursued—outcasts, whether people knew it or not. I never could live that kind of a life."

He was silent for so long a period that she feared he was hopelessly offended and disappointed in her. She did not want that—even tho what he demanded was impossible. She placed a gentle hand on his sleeve, and he snatched his eyes for a moment from the road to glance at her.

"What would you say," he began, slowly, "to a bargain? I want you, little girl, more than anything else in the world. I'm willing to give it all up—to have you with me always. Come with me tonight, and I'll promise after this there will be nothing that even you would term shady, in my career."

"And you agree to leave all the ore behind?"

A frown crossed his features.

"That is something I can't do. You see, there are others involved. I make this promise for the future—but what I have in this machine isn't mine, except a small part; it is merely entrusted to me. Let us get this deal thru, and after tonight, dearest——"

But already Marion's mind was busy with ingenious speculations. Quickly she planned it out. Her stock in the Tokyo was worth anywhere from sixty to seventy thousand dollars. Could she not sell enough to equal the value of the ore and return it anonymously with a trumped-up explanation of guilty conscience? That done, she could also announce her marriage—and nobody would be the wiser. After all, the elopement would be turned into something little more harmful than a lark. Too bad she could not leave word to relieve Aunt Lucia's inevitable anxiety. But even that detail might be arranged.

"Will you go with me?" he repeated.

Slowly she raised her eyes to meet his searching gaze. Her expression was guileless—too guileless to be true, had he only known it.

"Will you come—Marion?" he breathed.

Her answer was scarcely audible, but it must have been heard, for it sent the machine forward at accelerated speed thru the streets of the sleeping town.

All at once she became aware of his intention.

"Why, you are driving straight ahead!" she exclaimed in alarm.

"Certainly."

"But we musn't take that road. It is guarded—haven't I convinced you? If we go, it must be the other route."

"This is much quicker," he insisted, "and I have a plan. If I guarantee to put neither of us in danger, will you trust me?"

"I'll say—I do trust you," she said, tho with unconcealed apprehension. "My only fear is for you. I have found something precious tonight—and I don't want to lose it."

"And I," he responded solemnly, "have in this car with me something far more valuable than high grade. You may be sure I will take no risks with it."

She laughed, whereat he looked surprised.

"It just occurred to me," she explained, "that I won't know what name to put on my wedding announcements. Since you aren't English, you can't be a lord, and I suppose all the rest was equally made up."

"Candidly," he agreed, "as your penetration surmised, I am not an Englishman. The title was adopted purely as the result of circumstances. You see, I had to escape in a hurry from Japan, and the chance offered of getting away under the name of an English friend who couldn't use the passage he had engaged.

"Sa-and!" They Cried.

To simplify matters, I adopted his name and title. It is probably apparent that I'm plain American. Studied mining engineering, but never put it into practice. Went to the Philippines as a soldier, and after retiring from the army, because there wasn't any more fighting in sight, I drifted around, acquiring experience in the Orient. Was returning from Japan, when we picked up Colonel Morningside, after the shipwreck. Learned his purpose in coming over here, got chummy with him, and decided to put my mining education to some practical use. He swallowed my bait without a suspicion and brought me here as his very dear friend, Lord Erskin. A little private investigating convinced me that there were interesting possibilities in organized highgrading."

"And you did all that because you thought it was justifiable?" inquired Marion doubtfully.

"In spite of my rather flippant way of treating the subject," he answered seriously, "I did."

She sighed. Would an unshaken, unswerving love ever be able to untwist the kinks in the moral code of this many-sided lover?

"And what is your plan of escape—what am I to do?"

"Leave everything to me—take your cue from what I say. Don't even try to evade their questions, if we are held for a time. I wish you would trust me for the rest."

"I will, in spite of——" she was about to say "your criminal past," but corrected it to "appearances."

For a moment he took a hand from the wheel to place it reassuringly around her shoulders.

"Do you think the road will be barricaded?" she inquired presently.

"That would hardly be feasible on a main traveled thorofare. More likely they count on the fact that this car will be heavily laden and difficult to run down. Did Mr. Saunders say anything about employing an auto in the springing of his trap?"

But she could give no information on that point, and there was a long silence between them, in which, it may be, their spirits held communion. Certainly, a delightful sense of harmony and satisfaction stole over Marion, as the road flashed under their wheels like an endless curving ribbon.

They must be nearing the bridge over Beaver Creek, five miles below the boundary of Forty-mile. A keen sense of anticipation was beginning to mingle with her thoughts. Partly, of course, this was quickened by the thrill of approaching danger and excitement. But uppermost was the exultation of knowing that this man beside her would prove his worthiness. Whether by a brilliant coup, an exhibit of daring and resource, or how, she did not attempt to guess—but he would be master of the situation—that she knew.

The denouement came with unexpected suddenness. A crackling volley of shots announced the springing of the trap. Marion felt her companion's arm around her, almost at the instant.

"They aimed at our tires," he reassured her in a low tone; "I expected that."

As his brakes were applied, out of the gloom at the side of the road rolled the huge bulk of an unlighted car. He suddenly threw on the clutch and forged ahead. The act was all that prevented a collision.

"We've got 'em!"

The shout from the other car was accompanied by a spurt of the high powered motor, as it bounded into pursuit.

"Down!" whispered Erskin, enforcing his command by the pressure of his arm across her shoulders. Marion instinctively bent forward to avoid the shots that might be fired.

Erskin glanced around apprehensively. The pursuers, anticipating a race, were rapidly gaining speed. If he complied at once with the demand to halt, their momentum would inevitably precipitate a collision.

The road was slightly elevated above a narrow stretch of fenced-in meadow. With a quick turn of the wrist, Erskin threw his wheels into the roadside depression. One headlight was rammed against a post of the bordering barbed wire fence, as the other car plunged by and ground to a stop a few yards beyond.

Bewildered by the shock, Marion submissively let herself be drawn back to the seat. A half dozen dimly outlined figures bore down on them from the other car. The foremost two leaped to the running boards.

"Two of 'em—by criminy!" panted a voice in Marion's ear. "And this here's the car—the tail light showed the number plain.

Erskin's tones cut incisively into the babel of panting exclamation. "What are you fellows up to?" he demanded sternly.

"You'll find out soon enough," raucously gloated one of his captors. "Keep the other arm in sight, young feller. Caught you with the goods this time."

"Caesar's ghost!" exclaimed the first who had spoken. "This here one's a woman!"

In his astonishment, he relaxed the unpleasantly tight grip on Marion's arm and floundered back to the roadside. "S'pose we've got the wrong——"

But other hands had been busily investigating the tonneau.

"Wrong, nothing!" and this time Marion recognized the tones of the speaker. "Got the loot right here."

"Mr. Saunders," she spoke impulsively, at the instant of recognition, "it's all a mistake. It can be explained—we——"

It was the superintendent's turn to be astonished. "It isn't you, Miss Dupont! What in the name of——"

He paused. The suspicion in his attitude was too pronounced not to be felt. Lord Erskin took up the subject calmly. "Miss Dupont's presence has a perfectly natural explanation," he assured.

By this time Saunders had stepped to the front of the car. "You'll have plenty of opportunity to explain matters," he informed his prisoner grimly. "But you aren't smooth enough to put this deal across."

The highgrader's manner was unruffled—his calmness was a little too pronounced to be trusted, Marion tensely felt. It was the sort of deadly calm that precedes a thunder clap.

"I only ask your consideration for Miss Dupont," he replied quietly. "She has aided you, gentlemen, in your capture. To save possible bloodshed, she laid a neat trap of her own and convinced me that I could not hope to escape your net. The mineral was already loaded in my car, and there was nothing left to do, I perceived, but to give myself up."

"It's a trick!" came angrily, in hoarse tones, from one of the superintendent's advisers. "Don't let 'im get you off your guard."

Several ominous mutterings confirmed this view.

Marion, herself, rather suspected that the conciliatory manner was part of a plan to disarm opposition. It was wrong—very wrong—but she could not help hoping that the effort might prove successful.

"If you like," said Erskin, to the group of indistinct faces, "I will submit to be handcuffed. That's the best proof of my sincerity I can offer."

"Step out—but no tricks," assented Saunders. To which the hoarse voice added peremptorily: "Keep your hands overhead."

What audacious trick was the man contemplating, wondered Marion, as he leisurely complied?

But the captive did nothing more exciting than to submit while a pair of handcuffs was efficiently snapped onto his wrists. A quick search resulted in the confiscation of his revolver.

The object of these delicate attentions submitted proudly and without protest to the indignity. Marion wondered—then—suddenly she knew!

It was not a trick—her lover was sincere. He was deliberately giving himself, a living sacrifice to the law. The great love that had so overwhelmed her conventional scruples that she was willing to go with him, trusting and uncomplaining, into the unknown, had roused in him an equal spirit of sacrifice. This was his way of informing her that he renounced the old life completely, that, for her, he was willing to pay the price. Her spirits rose in an ecstasy of appreciation, even while it seemed that she could not endure the pain of his sacrifice.

"I am at your disposal, gentlemen," came his voice, clear-cut and incisive.

"What do you want done with him?" demanded he of the hoarse voice.

"We'll take him back in the machine, of course."

"A'right, pard. Guess we can heave him up on top o' the sacks."

"But the other car——" suggested Saunders—"we can make better time with it——"

"That's wanted below fer another job. I told 'em sure I'd send it back to Den-

ver by morning, if we got thru in time. Hey, Al, come and see if this here auto's in shape to run."

Obediently the chauffeur of the detective car strolled back and nonchalantly administered the "once over" to the prize. He announced that the tires, such as they were, seemed to be in shape to last for a few miles of service; the engine, tho of a pattern he strongly disapproved, was uninjured; and the only damage, in fact, was the shattered headlight. "Better get a pair o' real lights, while yer fixin' up," he advised the owner condescendingly. "A kerosene lamp'll match up with th' one you got left."

"Right-o," was his superior's response. "If you think she'll run us into Forty-mile, you hit the dust back fer Denver. "And youse guys," he turned to his assistants, "except Mike and Kifer, go with him."

When Al, the disdainful, and his fellow preservers of law and order, had forged from view among the first road-bend, with a final snort of disgust from the unmuffled engine, his superior turned with the brisk suggestion:

"Now, let's get a move on. First thing is to stow this guy on top o' the load." He turned to the superintendent. "Who's goin' to run the shindig—you?"

"Why—er——" Saunders hesitated, "I don't happen to drive a car myself. Can't you take the wheel, Dugan?"

"Nothin' doing. Either of you guys?" demanded Dugan.

A painful lack of response followed his question. Marion unsympathetically smiled, and forebore to mention that she drove a car of that make.

"Hell of a note," commented Dugan feelingly. "What'd you let me send my man back fer, 'thout saying anything?"

"I confess I didn't think of this phase," admitted Saunders. "What shall we do—walk?"

The suggestion met with a silence that could hardly have been construed as enthusiasm.

Dugan of the hoarse voice again spoke, tho his aggressiveness was tinged with a hang-dog undercurrent.

"The lady can't do that," he commented with suddenly developed solicitude. "If we loose the guy and keep a gun at his neck, on the run back, I don't think there'll be any monkey business."

So the bonds to which the captive had ignominiously submitted were removed. He made no comment, but stepped lithely into the car, adjusted a lever or two, and waited at attention. Surreptitiously, and without change of countenance, he acknowledged Marion's triumphant pressure against his knee by a like system of telegraphy.

"Any instructions?" he inquired in a tone devoid of expression. Detective Dugan ascended to the running board and, true to his promise, directed his revolver at the point of the driver's anatomy designated by phrenologists the bump of philoprogenitiveness. Under his directions the car was carefully backed around and turned, until its remaining headlight pointed in the direction of Forty-mile. Then the other three men of the party secured footing on the running board, Mike and Kifer at the rear, Saunders at Marion's elbow.

Progress was slow, but even so at every bump Marion feared for the springs. One of the men in the rear mentioned presently that it was late—nearly four o'clock—and the other commented on the fact that the "president guy" had not arrived for the "doin's."

Saunders did not show a disposition to open a conversation. Marion sensed a vague repulsion in his manner. Perhaps he resented her interference—perhaps he suspected her. She reflected, guiltily, that she deserved his aloofness—but could not force herself to feel as downcast as the occasion seemed to demand. She was his opponent now, in desire, if not in principle.

When they were still two miles from their destination, one of the tires suddenly went flat. The captive driver once more found his services in demand, and for hours—so it seemed—he toiled in uncomplaining silence, under Dugan's leveled revolver and the muttered curses of his custodians in general, first to repair the tire, and then to replace it with the one carried for emergencies.

His expert judgment, given upon request, was that one of the shots had penetrated the tire in a way to weaken, but not quite to puncture it. For a man who was ordinarily so efficient, and who had given evidence that he was a master of his car, Marion could not suppress a reflection that he was extraordinarily slow—inexplicably slow, unless he was "stalling," as the impatient group around him was beginning to hint more or less delicately. Even Saunders burst out with:

"This won't gain you anything. As a gentleman, you might consider that a lady is subject to the same discomfort you seem deliberately trying to inflict on us. If the tire isn't in place within ten minutes we'll walk you into town."

The job was finished expeditiously after that, but already the landscape was creeping into cold, gray visibility, while the eastern sky over Little Bear Mountain glowed with the near advent of sunrise.

CHAPTER XI.

THE SHOWDOWN.

IT WAS after six o'clock when the machine, with its heavy cargo, rolled slowly into the outer confines of Forty-mile. Saunders gave instructions for driving to the hotel. "I guess that will be the first thing," he commented, turning to his lieutenant.

"Suits me," assented Dugan. "I say we get some flapjacks under our belts; then fer business."

"Permit me to make a suggestion," deferentially observed the prisoner. "In a case of this nature, I would go first to the mill and there check up the salvage. Those who assist in the capture will thus be able to identify it, if necessary."

Merwin Saunders gave a gasp of astonishment at this bit of fatherly advice, and even Dugan admitted regretfully, "The guy's right."

Arrived at the mill, the sacks and the two tall cans of cyanide precipitate were deposited on the scales just inside the door, weighed, opened, and the mineral given an estimated value in Saunders' notebook.

"Now for them flapjacks," croaked Dugan gaily, as his cohorts scrambled into the car. "Hit her up, shoff."

The "shoff," with no resentment at the familiarity, urged his machine toward the hotel.

Thruout the ride Marion had made no attempt at conversation, except to reply in monosyllables to an occasional commonplace ventured by her companion. When the latter casually mentioned that he must lose no time in ordering a new lamp to replace the broken one, Saunders gave him a puzzled glance, not untinged with admiration.

"You won't have a chance to use this car again very soon," he commented grimly. "The combined influence of the State mine owners will be used to railroad you to the penitentiary for the maximum term. We've determined to make an example. Sorry it had to be you."

"I hope to get everything I deserve," came the answer—it was altogether too meek to be sincere, thought Marion. She had a suspicion, tho nothing was said to indicate as much, that her own movements were under close surveillance.

On his word not to take advantage of his freedom, the prisoner was granted the privilege of having his breakfast without external evidence that he was under arrest. Marion managed to secure the seat she coveted next to him at the table. It might be—she choked a little at the thought—their last meal together—at least for years.

The party which they composed happened to be the only occupants of the dining-room, except an exceedingly well groomed little gentleman of plump, unmistakably Japanese countenance. He called the sleepy-eyed waitress and asked her a question as the party gathered, at which she jerked her head toward Saunders. The foreigner immediately arose, and approached with a collected smile.

"Have I pleasure to address the Mr. Superintendent?" he inquired.

"You have, sir. What can I——?" Saunders paused with sudden enlightenment. "Why, you must be Prince Naguchi, of course! We were not expecting you until tomorrow. Your note——"

"Ah, that note." A gesture of depreciation accompanied this. "My regretful unfamiliarity with thees country cause me to get wrong date. I arrive last night, but make mistake to alight from train at—at——"

"Messalina Junction," prompted Saunders. "Many newcomers do. I am sorry. We intended to give you a rousing welcome. You came over this morning?"

"By accommodation train—yes. I hope Colonel Mr. Morningstar soon return. I am anxious to renew old friendship."

"Return?" Saunders looked puzzled, at which the pasty faced hotel clerk, who had draped himself in the doorway, officiously volunteered: "His bed wasn't slep' in last night."

Saunders turned with a worried air to his assistants, who missed neither a detail of the conversation nor a bite of the steaming cakes before them. "Do you suppose," he inquired in a troubled tone, "tne Colonel had an accident?"

"Be'er send a search par'y," responded Dugan, without missing a stroke of the knife which was plying between the plate and his stoking cavity.

"Perhaps," suggested the Prince, "that toot of horn indicate he are on way to relieve our anxiety."

The screech of a siren had, indeed, been heard by all present. The clerk disappeared at once. Thru the front windows the diners saw a machine drive up and come to a stop. It contained three or four occupants and was at once surrounded by an excited throng.

"He's injured!" exclaimed Marion, as a heavy object was carefully lifted from the tonneau.

At this point an excited version of the smart hotel clerk burst in.

"Colonel Morningside's captured the highgrader!" he shouted.

In less than half a minute the dining-room was deserted of all save Marion and the prisoner. In the excitement of the moment Dugan had overlooked the formality of detailing a guard to watch him. Erskin gave a hasty glance at the suddenly emptied room, then did what any worth-while lover would have done under the circumstances.

"Keep your faith in me a little longer," he breathed softly, as they hurried guiltily forth from this stolen moment.

The human burden was being borne up the stairs as they joined the noisy crowd in the lobby. It was not Colonel Morningside, for that gentleman, in automobile cap surmounted by goggles, was being solicitously conducted to a chair. His tottering figure was the center of attention, and Dugan had some trouble in edging toward him. His voice, however, could be heard without difficulty above the excitement. He addressed one of the president's two supporters, vigorously demanding enlightenment.

"Well, boss!" came the response. "We got 'im."

"Got who!" demanded Saunders.

"Oh, wake up!" counseled Dugan disrespectfully. "Don't you cop the lay? They was two of 'em—left with a load apiece by diff'rent routes. I had a hunch they'd try to relay the stuff past that break at the Narrows, so I sent Murphy and Spindler down to the lower fork."

"And you sure made one guess when you done it," assured the man addressed as Murphy. "At that, we wouldn't be here to tell th' tale, if it hadn't been f'r the old boy——" He indicated President Morningside, who was struggling painfully in the arm chair to recover his forces.

"But how'd the old party get there?" demanded Dugan impatiently.

"He can explain better nor we," suggested Murphy. "But right now you guys want to take off your hats to a game sport, if they ever was one."

All eyes were turned toward the hero. Murphy seized the opportunity to elaborate his story.

"We was just thinkin' of startin' back, when this here auto comes whizzin' down the canyon. We knowed it must be them, 'cause no one else wouldn't 'a' come outa no blind road. Stop it! We couldn't a stopped it with a ton o' dinnymite. But we fired, o' course, and then—all of a suddint—the wheels began to wobble. It run off into the side and swung 'round, and we was just in time to see this president guy lean over and shove the driver outa the way, while he brings the car to a stop."

With a tired smile, the president met the unspoken question in the eyes of the spectators.

"You'll excuse me for not going into details," he began, with a thin suggestion of his oracular manner. "I took a notion to investigate the gulch." Marion thought of the machine they had passed earlier in the evening. "At the Narrows, I had the unfortunate experience of being seized by outlaws and knocked senseless. I woke to find myself bumping along on top of the loot, and while I

(Continued on Page 24.)

Whenever The Weather's Dirty Wherever The Work Is Rough

At your work outdoors, these days of rain and slush, you need and must have thorough foot protection.

Put your feet in U. S. "Protected" rubber footwear and you'll laugh at the weather. You'll be warm, dry and comfortable under the roughest conditions. You'll get better service and longer wear and save money in the bargain. U. S. stands supreme for service.

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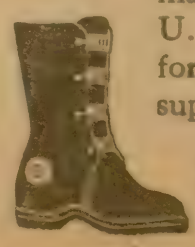


United States Rubber Company
New York

U. S. Rubber Footwear

Bob—"What a nuisance that chap is." Jack—"Oh, fierce! After you've touched him for money five or ten times he begins asking you to repay it."

Some Extract.

Extract from a soldier letter, repeated by a censor who had a sense of humor: Somewhere in France.

Dear Ma—I have saved a little money, and when I get back home I'm goin' to buy me two mules, and name one of 'em Corporal and the other one Sergeant; then I'm goin' to lick hell out o' both of 'em!—Life.

Doctor—"You say you were hit with a flatiron. You do seem to be suffering from shock."

Patient—"Yes, it was an electric iron."

Conservation.

Jimmy is a small 10-year-old and very unpopular with the family just now. He reckons time from a bagful of ill-gotten marbles, and has reduced the use of soap and water to a fine point. The other morning he was, as usual, late at breakfast. Finally his father mounted the steps a few at a time only to come on Jimmy in the bathroom door looking complacently into his mother's hand mirror.

"What are you doing with that mirror?" his father asked brusquely.

"Trying to see which part of my face to wash," he answered, promptly.

The Wise Chinese.

Banker Earl C. Dodge of Boston, who has lived in China, said in a recent after-dinner speech:

"Anybody who doubts the wisdom of the Chinese should read their proverbs. The Chinese have a book of 10,000 proverbs, and they're all as wise and true as the first one in the volume, which says:

"'It is safer to pull a tiger's tail than to call a lady's attention to her first gray hair.'"

Measuring John's Industry.

"They say your husband is so lazy you can't depend on him to wind the clock," remarked the crude woman.

"No," replied the patient woman. "John isn't that lazy. He can wind an ordinary clock, but I wouldn't expect him to stay at work long enough to wind one of these cheap tin watches."

Actor—"Can you tell me how far it is to the next station?"

Station Master—"Sure. It's just 287,-248 chorus girls and a big ditch."

A Total Loss.

A colored patient beside me in the hospital seemed to brood and brood over the fact that the Germans had "got" him. His commander had ordered him to charge a nest of Boche machine guns alone and they shot him in three places as he started toward them.

"But Ah'll sho git even with dem fo' what dey dun to me."

"Well, old man," I comforted, "you did your duty. Too bad you couldn't get them, tho. But——"

"What's dat you say?" he interrupted me. "Couldn't git dem! Why, man alive, dem Cuhmans wahn't no trouble a-tall—but mah best razah am completely busted up!"—Judge.

Enter, the Ghost.

The English lecture was drawing slowly to close. Only ten minutes more of agony remained, and the unfortunate victims were getting decidedly restless.

"Now," proceeded the professor, "we have considered all the immortal heroes of Shakespearean tragedy except the renowned Hamlet. And where, I ask, shall we place Hamlet?"

The tall Frosh in the rear seat slowly rose to his feet.

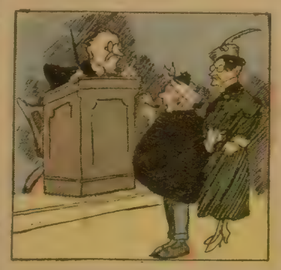
"Well," he said, "I guess he can have my seat. I'm going."

Home Helpfulness.

"I was tempted," said Mr. Meekton, "to give Henrietta a moving picture machine for Christmas."

"Is she to lecture?"

"Not in public. But I had an idea that maybe some of those long talks she gives me would be more interesting if they were illustrated."



Judge—"Had you been drinking when you struck your wife?"

Badly Damaged Prisoner—"Yes, judge—I thought there was a special Providence that watched over drunken men, but I found that there wasn't."

Quick Sales and Small Profits.

First Passenger—"Does this train stop here long enough to let you get something to eat?"

Second Passenger—"No, just long enough to let you pay for what you order."—Judge.

So It Goes.

"I tell my wife she's perfect, but she evidently doesn't agree with me."

"What makes you think that?"

"This bill for false hair and cosmetics. She's always adding improvements."

Such Ignorance!

"One, two, three, four; one, two three, four——" yelled the drill-sergeant.

"My goodness me," said the sweet little thing, "do they really have to teach those ignorant mechanics how to count up to four?"

Deceived.

"Poor Maud! She got cruelly deceived when she married that old man."

"Didn't he have any money?"

"Oh, yes, plenty of money; but he is ten years younger than he said he was."

The Ways of the Wicked.

Congressman Edward E. Holland of Virginia remarked at a social gathering in Washington that things do not always turn out the expected way, and told the following story as an example:

An elderly man was traveling on a Southern train when he became engaged in conversation with a younger man in the seat beside him. Eventually the talk led to personal experience.

"Once I was a clerk in a grocery store at $10 a week," said the younger man, speaking of his earlier life, "but, like many others, I fell in with careless companions and was induced to gamble——"

"I see! I see!" interjected the elderly one with a sigh. "You gambled and was tempted to take money that did not belong to you."

"Oh, no," was the cheerful rejoinder of the younger man. "I won enough in a month to buy the grocery store."

Awful to Contemplate.

After a club meeting two women met in the hall.

"I was just thinking about poor Uriah Umson," said one.

"What about him?"

"You know what a lovely home his wife bought with his life insurance money?"

"Yes, of course."

"You know the man who married his widow married again as soon as Mrs. Umson passed away."

"What, again?"

"Yes. That's three times for him."

"No wonder you say poor Uriah!"

"Yes, indeed. Just think how he must feel up there above, looking down on a man he never saw living in his house as his wife's second husband with his third wife."

Lost on the Deep.

An amateur sailor was making his first trip across the Atlantic, and was in the throes of seasickness when the ship's surgeon came across him.

"What's the matter?" was the doctor's callous query.

"O-o-oh!" was the only response as the young man rolled over in agony.

"Come, get up," derided the surgeon, grinning unfeelingly. "The ship's been torpedoed and will sink in ten minutes."

"Ten minutes?" the sick man protested feebly. "Can't you make it any sooner?"

In Ireland.

An Ulster Orangeman recently bought a new car of which he was very proud.

He was showing it to a friend when the latter, after admiring the purchase, said:

"Now ye'll be complate an' up to date if yer get your name nicely painted in Roman lethers."

"In Roman lethers!" exclaimed the Orangeman in horror. "Begorra, man, do ye want to get me excommunicated?"

In the Lead.

Soon or late the old friends come back, however, newly dressed: The paper announced the death of William B. Jones when he was not dead. The next day it printed the following notice:

"Yesterday we were the first newspaper to publish the news of the death of Mr. William B. Jones. Today we were the first to deny the report. The Morning Star is always in the lead."

Fed Up.

The Optimist—"In the words of our great statesmen, let us determine to make this country fit for heroes to live in."

The "Fed" One (bitterly)—"Well, wot abart it? That's all it blinkin' well is fit for!"

Fulfilling Its Mission.

"Pretty dull magazine you're getting out. You'll never interest the public with it."

"You don't understand. This is for doctors and dentists to place on their anteroom tables."

The Right Man.

"They say Miss Highstrung is going to marry an Army officer."

"Well, I should think a man who makes a business of war might be able to get along with her."

Between Wives.

"Closing the saloons has brought great changes."

"You bet," said the other dry town inhabitant. "Nowadays a woman doesn't know where to find her husband.—Judge.

Dark.

"Don't you know I tol' yo' not to go swimmin' wid no white trash chillun, eh?" sternly asked Sambo Johnsing.

"But he wa'n't a white before he went in," replied Sambo's small son.

A Helpful Spouse.

Hub—"What did you do with all those unpaid bills, Alice?"

Wife—"I saw they were beginning to worry you, dear, so I destroyed them."

WHEN YOU AND I WERE YOUNG

"Some Day in the Life of James"

1 P.M.
JAMES, HERE IS A QUARTER FOR CUTTING THE GRASS AND FOR HELPING YOUR MOTHER SO MUCH THIS WEEK.
2 P.M.
SAY, JAMES, I'LL GIVE YOU A QUARTER IF YOU WILL PROMISE TO STAY AWAY WHEN GEORGE CALLS THIS AFTERNOON.
YOU BET, SIS.
3 P.M.
JAMES, DEAR, MOTHER WILL GIVE YOU A QUARTER IF YOU WILL GO TO THE DENTISTS LIKE A GOOD BOY.
GIMME THE MONEY, MA.
4 P.M.
THAT NIGHT.
TWO MORE, WAITER.
COIN

Brain Teasers.

Anagram.

48—My first is in hen, but not in goose.
My second is in goose, but not in hen.
My third is in chin, but not in forehead.
My fourth is in forehead, but not in chin.
My fifth is in you, but not in me.
My whole is something sweet.

Omitted Vowels.

49—Supply vowels in the following and have a well known phrase of Shakespeare:

"T b r n t t b t h t s t h q s t n."

Double Decapitations.

50—1. Behead a weapon used in hunting and leave a fruit; again, and leave what Polonius in "Hamlet" bade Laertes "give every man."

2. Behead to wink drowsily and leave a part of a chain; again, a liquid in universal use.

3. Behead a part of an automobile and leave what is bad to be "out at;" again, and leave a certain fish.

4. Behead to upbraid and leave frigid; again, and leave ancient.

5. Behead a dangerous sea monster and leave to listen; again, and leave a kind of vessel.

6. Behead a sluggish animal and leave part of a finger; again, and leave indisposed.

7. Behead calm and leave to cultivate; again, and leave harm.

8. Behead that which, rolling, gathers no moss and have a melody; again, and leave a whole.

Cut Gems.

51—1. Cut a letter from a gem and transpose into a weapon.

2. Cut two letters from a gem and have the uppermost part.

3. Cut a letter from a gem and have friction.

4. Cut a letter from a gem and have a writer of modern fables.

5. Cut two letters from a gem and transpose into a negative.

6. Cut two letters from a gem and transpose into a river of Europe.

7. Cut a letter from a gem and transpose into colorless.

8. Cut a letter from a gem and transpose into cut off.

9. Cut a letter from a gem and transpose into large.

10. Cut a letter from a gem and transpose into a trader.

11. Cut a letter from a gem and transpose into a musical instrument.

12. Cut a letter from a gem and have a passageway.

ANSWERS TO LAST WEEK'S PUZZLES.

44. Charade.

Larkspur.

45. Mathematical Problem.

Arthur's share was $24,324 12-37, Bertram's share was $19,459 17-37 and Carl's was $16,216 8-37.

46. Five Word Square.

S P O R T
P O L A R
O L I V E
R A V E N
T R E N D

47. Cancellation.

Bear, cow, elephant, giraffe, horse, kangaroo, lion, monkey, ox, tiger

It is not desired that readers send in the answers to the puzzles. They are printed simply as brain teasers, and the correct answers will be printed the following week.

The Happy Mean.

Father (home on leave)—"I hope you have been a good boy during my absence, Jack?"

Jack—"Well, no. I'm afraid I haven't.

Father—"Indeed! I hope you haven't been very bad?"

Jack—"No-o! Just comfortable!"

On the 'Phone.

Man (at telephone)—"What! Line still busy? Why, great cats, I've been trying to get that number for half an hour."

Central (sweetly)—"It's a party line, you know."

Man (wildly)—"Party nothing! It's a convention line!"

Long Drawn Out.

Madge—"I thought your engagement to him was merely for the duration of the war."

Marjorie—"Pshaw! It will go on indefinitely. We've agreed to extend it for the duration of the Peace Conference."—Life.

Quite Right.

"Name a thing of importance which did not exist in one form or another a thousand years ago!" thundered Professor Bigghead.

"You, sir," suggested a meek freshman in the front row.

Mr. Binks—"Why so unhappy?"

Mrs. Binks—"I hate that Mrs. Nextdoor with a deadly hate, and I'm perfectly miserable over it."

Mr. Binks—"But she doesn't know it."

Mrs. Binks—"That's why I'm unhappy."

Out of Luck.

Afraid to breathe, almost, the returned reveller crept quietly into his bedchamber as the gray dawn was breaking. Sitting on the edge of the bed, he cautiously undid his boots. But, with all his care, his wife stirred in bed, and he presently was all too well aware of a pair of sleepy eyes regarding him, over the edge of the sheet.

"Why, Tom," yawned the little woman, "how early you are this morning!"

"Yes, my dear," replied Tom, stifling a groan, "I've got to go to Montreal for the firm today."

And replacing his footwear the wretched man dragged his aching limbs out again into the cold and heartless streets.

What He Required.

After reading a poem about a little boy who was so happy because there were lovely flowers, beautiful birds, blue sky and running brooks, seven-year-old William remarked:

"Those things would never make me happy, Miss Jones."

"Why, William," replied his teacher, "what would it take to make you happy?"

"Saturdays!" was the prompt reply.

Not to Be Wasted.

"My boy has a wonderful amount of perseverance and persistency, an optimism nothing can dim and a nerve nothing can daunt. What work would you put him to?"

"I should think with those qualities he would make an ideal book agent."

Howell—"What was the charge against that fellow who struck the actor with the tomato—breach of peace, or assault and battery?"

Powell—"Neither—wasting food."

Added Years.

Wife—"Tomorrow will be my twenty-sixth birthday."

Hubby—"Why, a year ago, just before our wedding, you told me you were twenty-two."

Wife—"Yes, but we women age rapidly after marriage."

Pacifying Mother.

Daughter—"Everett kissed me last night."

Mother (indignantly)—"That is outrageous. Did you sit on him for it?"

Daughter—"I did."

Formal Notice.

"What's the delegation?"

"We propose to wait formally upon our landlady to tell her that the war is over and suggest that a reasonable amount of food supplies may now be released."

Safe.

Mistress (to prospective colored maid)—"And you're sure if I took you I'd have in you a reliable servant?"

Ebony Applicant—"Yes, honey, you kin trus' me. I ain't got no habits at all, no habits whatsomever."—Judge.

Absent-minded.

A lady showing evidence of having entered a street car near the shopping district, and, seeing a friend, she stood in front of her talking.

"Sit down," said the friend, making room for her.

"Really dear, I haven't time," replied the flustered woman. "I'm in such a hurry to get to the station."

Mrs. Benham—"Mother writes that she is coming to spend a week with us."

Benham—"Well, what are you waiting for?"

Mrs. Benham—"Waiting to hear you say 'Delighted.'"

Her Confession.

A Washington housewife put a budget system into effect in her house. The scheme worked beautifully. The book began to fill up with figures, which looked very businesslike. But, some way or other, when the balance was struck at the end of the month, the outlay was bigger than ever.

"I just don't understand it," said the wife. "I took such an interest in the book, and put everything down and endeavored to keep things to a minimum. What do you suppose is the matter?"

"I don't know," replied her husband, sympathetically, "Can't you think of any reason?"

"Well, I think the reason is," she replied with a cheerful grin, "I like to buy things so I can put them in the book."

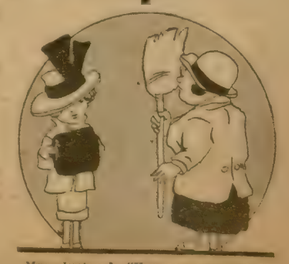
His Celestial Job.

Sergt (blowing whistle)—"Private Buck, get out on detail."

Private Buck—"For heaven's sake, when do I rest?"

Sergt.—"You will rest when you get to heaven."

"Well, I hope so, but I'll bet a dose of goldfish hash I won't be in heaven ten minutes when just as I lie down and the angels come over to my bed and start singing to me, old boy Sergeant Gabriel will toot his whistle and say, 'Private Buck, get up. You're on detail tonight, go down and hang out the stars'."—Judge.



Mrs. Justwed—"You say you and Mr. Knagg have been married four years and never had a quarrel until now?"

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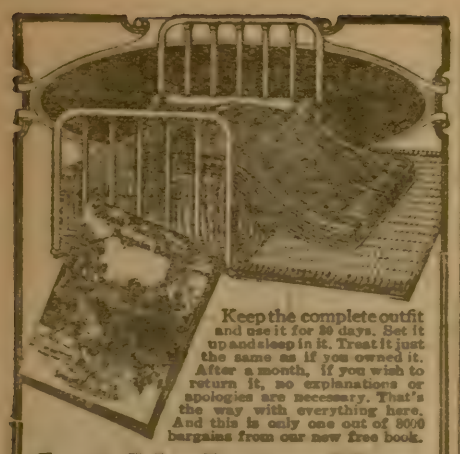

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The Sable Lorcha

(Continued From Page 6)

that free, lissome stride which I loved. "It is an old, dead chestnut, a great giant of the woods, imposing even in death; and it stands only a half-dozen yards off the trail. I was looking for ferns, or I never in the world should have come upon it. How do you imagine that thing ever got away off here? And who could have stuck it up on that dead tree trunk?"

"That is precisely what I should like to find out," was my reply. "It seems very mysterious to me. About what time was it, when you discovered it?"

"Just before I met you."

"Had you heard any shooting in the woods, before that?"

"Shooting? she queried, apparently surprised. 'No. Was some one shooting?"

"I understood so. Poaching, I imagine. After some of Cameron's fat pheasants."

"But it's out of season," she declared, promptly.

"That makes small difference with a poacher."

Her belief in her ability to lead me to the tree of which we were in quest was not unfounded. Twice she paused and peered in between the gray trunks which grew close to our path; once she took a step off the trail, bending in keen-eyed search of certain familiar landmarks. These were the only interruptions to what was otherwise a straight march to the goal.

When, at length, we reached it, she identified it beyond question, and I had little difficulty in finding the nail from which the piece of canvas had been suspended. It was one of thin wire, with very small head, driven into the tree at a distance of about four and a half feet from the ground. Just beneath it I found four scattering bullet holes, with the bullets too deepy embedded to be extracted with so poor a tool as a pocket knife.

From this it was evident that the shots had been fired at comparatively short range, as indeed they must have been, seeing that the trees here grew so thickly as to make impossible any very extended line of sight upon the target.

Somewhat to Evelyn's perplexity I began making a careful inspection of the ground, not only about the tree, but as far away from it as the range of vision extended.

"What are you looking for?" she demanded, with a show of concern, and, I thought, a little peevishly.

"Footprints," I answered, laughing. "Behold the American Sherlock!"

"Have you found any?"

"Only Cinderella's," and that put her in good humor.

But I found something of much more importance than the indentations of shoe soles. I found it very near the foot of the tree, just below where the painting had hung. It was half hidden by underbrush, and at first I mistook it for a stone. Unobserved by Evelyn, I slipped it into my pocket.

"After all," I said to her, "there's not very much to be learned here, is there?"

CHAPTER V.
FOUND DEAD.

MY MOTOR BOAT, which had been running swiftly and smoothly, with the least possible clamor from the exhaust, suddenly missed a stroke and then, after a succession of choking sobs, ceased all effort, and gradually losing headway, drifted idly with the tide.

"Well done, Jerry," I whispered from my seat in the stern to the capable young Irishman who was bending over the motor—whispered, because, as all the world knows, the water is a sounding board, and I had no intention of permitting any one on shore to hear my words of approval.

To all appearances the motor had broken down, and we were voyagers in distress.

"The tide's settin' in," murmured Jerry. "Unless I miss me guess, it'll land us on his beach inside o' five minutes, sir."

The slender scallop of a new moon had set an hour before, but the night was luminously clear, and the stars blazed with an almost Southern effulgence. There was very little breeze and the waters of the Mianus were scarcely rippled. The air was chill, however, tho now and then there came to us a warm breath from the fields which all day long had lain baking in the fervent sunshine. Along the shore to our left we caught the glint of lights from the summer cottages.

A catboat, with sail wrinkling in the uncertain breeze, glided by us, almost too near for comfort, and we caught a sentence, two sentences, in fact, from the conversation of the occupants:

"Nobody knows him," in clear, ringing masculine tones; and, "He's handsome, if he is surly," in a woman's voice.

I wondered if they were speaking of Murphy. My telephone inquiry of Cameron and subsequent questioning of the men about my place had proved to me that both observations would apply. No one seemed to know very much of this brawny, sandy giant, in spite of his two years' residence in the neighborhood.

Now the shore's shadow was engulfing us, and the next moment, with a gentle swish of waters, we felt the boat's bottom grate on the pebbly beach. There was a landing a short distance further up—a spindling wooden pier—and to this Jerry, knee deep in the black water, turned the boat and made it fast.

The prospect which confronted us as we walked shoreward over the creaking planks was about as hospitable as the grim walls of a prison. The tree barrier rose stark and forbidding a dozen yards away. Between it and the river was a combination of pebbles, sand, high grass and ragged overgrown lawn, faintly visible in the starlight. On nearer approach, however, we found an opening in the curtain of trees, a veritable valley of shadow, thru which we passed to a strip of neglected sward and a squat, unpainted weather-beaten cottage of a single story, with vine-screened veranda.

And in what seemed to us the very center of the house front, there shone a tiny glowing point of red fire. We had not come altogether in vain. By all the odds of chance, it was a safe conclusion that Murphy was behind that lighted end of a cigar. Then we saw the point move, describing a half circle, and simultaneously a voice rang out—a deep, sonorous voice, but of churlish intonation:

"What do you want here?"

I suppose he expected me to come to a sudden halt, but I was then only a few steps distant from the veranda, and as I answered him, I covered that distance.

"My motor boat ran out of gasoline," I said, "and drifted to your beach. I was in hopes we might borrow enough to get us home."

I saw him now, dimly, in the shadowed recess. He was seated facing me, a creature of great bulk, with huge head and ponderous shoulders.

"I don't keep gasoline," was his gruff response.

"I thought——" I began, but his next utterance drowned my words.

"I say I don't keep it," he reiterated, in louder tones. "Isn't that plain?"

"Oh, quite. You have neither gasoline nor good manners."

I saw him rise, a massive tower, dwarfing his surroundings, and take a step forward to the edge of his porch.

"This is my house and my castle," he flung at me, savagely, "and I won't stand for trespassers. If you two don't want to be flung off my property, it would be advisable for you to make haste in going."

My laugh was not calculated to salve his ill humor, yet I think he must have gathered from it that I was not to be terrorized by either his size or his threats.

"Your name's Murphy, I think," I ventured, calmly, not moving an inch. But he made no response.

"Mine is Clyde," I went on; "I am one of the State game wardens."

"I'm not interested in who you are," he growled.

"But I'm interested in learning what your Chinaman was shooting this morning, over on the Cameron place."

"Then find out," was his courteous retort. "I'm sure I shan't tell you."

"Maybe the Chinaman will be more obliging," I suggested, and turning to Jerry, who had stood in silence all the while, a few steps behind me, I said: "Look around at the back, my lad, and if you can find Mr. Murphy's man fetch him here."

But before I had quite finished, the big man in the shadow of the veranda was storming:

"He'll stop just where he is. If he dares to come another step nearer this house, I'll throw the pair of you over

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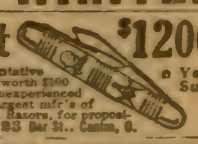

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the hedge, neck and crop. Do you hear me?"

"And if you dare to interfere with an officer or his deputy in the discharge of his duty, the authorities will settle with you," was the calm rejoinder. "Trot ahead, Jerry! His bark's worse than his bite."

Jerry, quick to obey, disappeared on the instant around the corner of the bungalow, and Murphy, after a pretended dash forward, halted on the lower porch step.

"See here!" he demanded, cumbrously. "What's all this, anyhow? You come here after gasoline, ostensibly, and then declare you're game wardens after a law-defying Chinese poacher."

At last I saw him half way amenable to reason. Now that he was out of the shadow, I saw too, more clearly, what manner of man he was. His head, as I had already discerned it thru the gloom, was abnormally large, yet not out of proportion with his herculean torso. His red hair, frowsy, unkempt, was of such abundance that, in the dark, its outline had given me a grotesquely magnified impression. His red beard, too, was thick, long and untrimmed. What little of his face showed, was sunburned to what, in the dim light, seemed the color of ripe russet apples. His eyes were nearly indiscernible, deep set, under bushy red brows.

"If you had shown the least bit of humanity to brother men in distress," I responded, in a half-jocular vein, "I'd probably never thought of this being your place, and you being you; and the incident of the morning might have been forgotten."

I thought I heard his teeth grit together in his effort to suppress a rising rage. I certainly saw his hands clinch; and then, with an assumption of indifference, he took a final puff at his cigar and tossed it, sparkling, among the weeds of his lawn.

It was evident to me, now, that in spite of the nonchalance he affected, my reference to the Chinaman's poaching, and his presence at Cragholt, had aroused his interest, and so hoping to draw him out, I continued:

"Your man told the lodge-keeper that you sent him over to borrow a rifle."

"You don't mean to tell me you'd believe a Chinaman, do you?" he returned.

"It wasn't for me to believe or disbelieve. The lodge-keeper believed him."

"And so he borrowed a rifle, and then with one of Cameron's own instruments of destruction proceeded to destroy Cameron's game? Is that it? What did he shoot? A deer or one of those starved-looking white dogs that Cameron has following him about?"

Apparently Murphy knew much more of my friend than my friend knew of Murphy.

"Neither, I fancy. In fact, I'm not sure just what he did shoot in the way of game. But he seems to have indulged in a bit of target practice. He found a piece of an old portrait, tacked to a tree, and shot holes in it. Rather silly, eh? Foolish for him to chance getting into trouble for child's play of that sort."

"How do you know that?" he growled, with an inadvertent dropping of his mask. There was no mistaking, now, that I had made captive his attention.

"I saw the target," I answered simply.

"That's like saying, 'I caught a twelve-pound bass. Here's the hook and line to prove it.'"

"I have a scale of the bass."

"A what?"

"Something your Chinaman dropped beside the tree."

Phlegmatic tho he was, something very like a start followed upon my words. Then, as if to cover the movement, he shrugged his shoulders, and chuckled ponderously.

"His visiting card, I suppose."

"Nearly as good," I supplied. "The bowl of his opium pipe."

At that moment Jerry came around the corner of the house and stopped abruptly, stupefied by surprise; for from the open mouth of the giant there issued a roar of bass laughter, that reverberated in weird discordance thru the night silences.

"You bally idiot!" he cried, his guffaw ended. "I suppose no persons except Chinamen smoke opium, eh! And that being so, no Chinaman but my Chinaman could have made a target of a piece of an old portrait and dropped his pipe bowl at the foot of a tree! Go on with you, you make me sick!" And then, seeing Jerry, who had quickly joined me: "Didn't find him, eh? Well, that's not strange. Having lost the bowl of his pipe, he's probably gone to borrow another from a laundryman friend in Cos Cob; and that, by the way, is about the nearest place for you to buy gasoline."

The next day I spent at my office, in New York, busy with the hundred details that go to making of a periodical which aims to focus popular sentiment to a righteous viewpoint concerning matters of national and social import. For the time being my consideration of Cameron and his strange problem was suspended.

When, however, my business day was ended, and I had boarded the train for Greenwich, the whole involved enigma spread itself again before me, demanding attention. And in the midst of it, dominating it, stretching his great shadow over it to the farthest limit, appeared that frowsy red giant, Murphy, a mystery within a mystery; for, tho he seemed to pervade it, there was no point at which I could discover him quite touching it.

In vain I tried to detect a real connection. I started with the letters. They bore no single characteristic mark of this uncouth creature. As an artist he might have devised the curious silhouette signature, but there was something about

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that—some cunning, inventive subtlety—which I could not reconcile with the ogre I had played upon, stung to anger and aroused to curiosity.

That he could either have conceived or executed the ruin of the portrait I did not believe possible. The conception, like the letters and the signature, bore evidence of a craftiness too fine for such as he; and to fancy him, mammoth that he was, stealing unobserved into Cameron's study, was to fancy the incredible.

And so, tho the impression of intimate relationship persisted, I could find no point of contact, closer or more definite than thru his servant's rifle practice, which after all might have been quite without motive.

There was little, therefore, in the line of reason, to convict Murphy of any knowledge of the matters which had so disturbed us. And yet, as I have said, I felt intuitively that he possessed an intimate acquaintance with the whole affair.

At the Greenwich station I found my touring car waiting; my mother in the tonneau. My chauffeur touched his cap as I approached.

"You may drive, Francois," I said, and I took the place at my mother's side.

"You look tired, Philip," she announced when I had kissed her. "Was it very warm in the city?" Her eyes were ever quick to note infinitesimal changes in my appearance of well-being.

"Not uncomfortable," I answered, indulgently. "I had a very busy day, tho. But I'm not the less fit because of it."

"We have had some little excitement here," she hastened, eager to give me the news. "Old Romney called you up on the telephone about noon. I happened to answer it, myself, and when I told him you were in New York, and would not be back until six, it just seemed he couldn't wait to unburden himself. 'Won't you please tell him, Mrs. Clyde,' he said, 'that Mr. Murphy's Chinaman was found at daybreak this morning, lying dead just outside Murphy's back door?'"

"Found dead!" I cried, in amazement.

"That is what he said. Then he added that the poor fellow's head had been crushed with some heavy instrument, and that Mr. Murphy had been arrested on suspicion and was in the Cos Cob lockup."

For a full minute, I think, I sat in silent amaze. Then theories and conjectures in infinite variety gave chase, one after the other, thru my excited brain. But it was more than ever difficult, I found, to reach anything like a satisfactory conclusion concerning the position the now lifeless Celestial and his accused master held in the chain of mysteries I wished so much to solve. That they were both of them more or less important links, however, I had small doubt.

"Did you know Mr. Murphy?" my mother asked. And all at once I realized that her question was a repetition. In my absorption I had not heeded the original inquiry.

"Nobody knows him," I answered, unconsciously echoing the words voiced by the man in the catboat on the previous night. "Nobody knows him. But I've met him in a rather casual way."

Strange as these happenings are, they are as everyday occurrences when compared to Cameron's experiences as told in the second installment of this story appearing in next week's Ledger.

* * *

A Bid for Baldness.

SANDY and Ikey had a dispute at the front as to which of their races had produced names the most famous in history. An odd bet it was. For each great name that Sandy named of a Scot whom history had honored he was to pull out one of Ikey's hairs, and Ikey was to have the same privilege.

"Do ye begin!" said Sandy.

"Moses!" said Ikey, and pulled.

"Bobbie Burns!" said Sandy, and returned the compliment.

"Abraham!" said Ikey, and pulled again.

"Ouch! Duggie Haig!" said Sandy.

And then Ikey grabbed a handful of hairs at once. "Joseph and his brethren!" he said, gloating a bit as he watched the tears starting from Sandy's eyes.

"So it's pulling them out in bunches ye are!" said Sandy. "Ah, well, man—" and he reached with both hands for Ikey's thatch. "The Hieland Brigade!" he roared, and pulled all the hairs his two hands would hold!

* * *

Some Practitioner.

SAM BROWN with an overseas cap and two bars on his arm was back in town.

"Hello, Sam, haven't seen you for a long time. Where have you been?" asked an old acquaintance.

"Ah's been ovah in France wid da United States Vetahnahy Fo'ces."

"Veterinary? I guess you mean veterans, don't you, Sam?"

"No, Ah reckons Ah means just what Ah says—vetahnahy. Ah jest naturally been a vètahnahy—feedin' them German dogs gunpowder for they distemper."—Judge.

The Third Degree

(Continued From Page 11)

tering, handed his master a card.

"Ah! ejaculated the judge. "Here's our man! Show him up."

When the servant had disappeared Mr. Jeffries turned to his host. With a show of irritation he said:

"I think you put too much faith in that woman, but you'll find out—you'll find out."

Judge Brewster smiled.

"That's our object, isn't it, Mr. Jeffries—to find out?" he said sarcastically.

"What's the name of this mysterious witness?" exclaimed the banker testily. "If the police haven't been able to find her why should Howard's wife be able to do so? There was a report that she herself was——" He paused and added, "Did she tell you who it was?"

"No," said the judge dryly, "she will tell us tonight."

The banker bounded in his seat.

"You'll see," he cried. "Another flash in the pan. I don't like being mixed up in this matter—it's disagreeable—most disagreeable."

Dr. Bernstein puffed a thick cloud of smoke into the air and said quietly:

"Yes, sir; it is disagreeable—but—unfortunately it is life."

Suddenly the door opened and Captain Clinton appeared, followed by his fidus Achates, Detective Sergeant Maloney. Both men were in plain clothes. The captain's manner was condescendingly polite, the attitude of a man so sure of his own position that he had little respect for the opinion of any one else. With an effort at amiability he began:

"Got your message, judge—came as soon as I could. Excuse my bringing the sergeant with me. Sit over there, Moloney." Half apologetically, he added: "He keeps his eyes open and his mouth shut, so he won't interfere. How do, doctor?"

Maloney took a position at the far end of the room, while Dr. Bernstein introduced the captain to Mr. Jeffries.

"Yes, I know the gentleman. How do, sir?"

The banker nodded stiffly. He did not relish having to hobnob in this way with such a vulgarian as a grafting police captain. Captain Clinton turned to Judge Brewster.

"Now, judge, explode your bomb! But I warn you I've made up my mind."

"I've made up my mind, too," retorted the judge, "so at least we start even."

"Yes," growled the other.

"As I stated in my letter, captain," went on the judge coolly, "I don't want to use your own methods in this matter. I don't want to spread reports about you, or accuse you in the papers. That's why I asked you to come over and discuss the matter informally with me. I want to give you a chance to change your attitude."

"Don't want any chance," growled the policeman.

"You mean," said the judge, peering at his vis a vis over his spectacles, "that you don't want to change your attitude."

Captain Clinton settled himself more firmly in his chair, as if getting ready for hostilities. Defiantly he replied:

"That's about what I mean, I suppose."

"In other words," went on Judge Brewster calmly, "you have found this—this boy guilty and you refuse to consider evidence which may tend to prove otherwise."

"'Tain't my business to consider evidence," snapped the chief. "That's up to the prosecuting attorney."

"It will be," replied the lawyer sharply, "but at present it's up to you."

"Me?" exclaimed the other in genuine surprise.

"Yes," went on Judge Brewster calmly, "you were instrumental in obtaining a confession from him. I'm raising a question as to the truth of that confession."

Captain Clinton showed signs of impatience. Shrugging his massive shoulders deprecatingly, said:

"Are we going over all that? What's the use? A confession is a confession and that settles it. I suppose the doctor has been working his pet theory off on you and it's beginning to sprout."

"Yes," retorted the judge quickly, "it's beginning to sprout, captain!"

The concluding installment brings out all the details of this mysterious case, showing the great love of Annie for her husband and what she will do because of it. Read it in next week's Ledger.

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THOUSANDS are held back in life for want of sufficient iron in the blood," says Dr. James Francis Sullivan, formerly physician of Bellevue Hospital (Outdoor Dept.), New York, and the Westchester County Hospital, in commenting on the relation of strong nerves and physical endurance to the attainment of success and power.

"A weak body means a weakened brain; weak nerve force means weakened will power, and like the race horse beaten by a nose, many a capable man or woman falls just short of winning because they don't back up their mentality with the physical strength and energy which come from having plenty of iron in the blood. That irritable twitch, that fit of despondency, that dizzy, fearful feeling—these are the sort of signals nature gives to tired, listless folks when the blood is clamoring for strength-giving iron—more iron to restore the health by enriching the blood and creating thousands of new red blood cells.

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In regard to the value of Nuxated Iron, former Health Commissioner of Chicago, William R. Kerr, said: "As Health Commissioner of the City of Chicago, I was importuned many times to recommend different medicines, mineral waters, etc. Never yet have I gone on record as favoring any particular remedy. But, in the case of Nuxated Iron, I feel an exception should be made to the rule. From my own experience with it, I feel that it is such a valuable remedy that it ought to be used in every hospital and prescribed by every physician in this country, and if my endorsement shall induce anæmic, nervous, run-down men and women to take Nuxated Iron, and receive the wonderful tonic benefits which I have received, I shall feel greatly gratified that I made an exception to my life-long rule in recommending it."

Dr. Schuyler C. Jaques, formerly Visiting Surgeon of St. Elizabeth's Hospital, New York City, said: "I have never before given out any medical information or advice for publication, as I ordinarily do not believe in it. But in the case of Nuxated Iron I feel I would be remiss in my duty not to mention it. I have taken it myself and given it to my patients with most surprising results. And those who wish quickly to increase their strength, power and endurance will find it a most remarkable and wonderfully effective remedy."

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The Kiss of the Silent Death

(Continued From Page 9.)

so feebly repulse, the mating male. But the light was toned and softened by an expression of sadness and renunciation that wrenched my heart until I could have cried aloud with the pain of it. It was a positive, harrowing torture to have this peerless love revealed, and at the moment of revelation stand helplessly by and see it torn away from me.

In the end we arrived at a sort of compromise—a poor sort in comparison with her unalterable decision. She agreed to wait and hear Strang's story.

"By the time you found my letter," she told me, "I had hoped to be on the train, miles away from Los Angeles. But since you have balked my object the way I had planned it, I suppose a few hours more or less will make no particular difference."

"Then why should days, or weeks, or months, or years make any particular difference either?" I stormed, beside myself. "You argue without rhyme or reason. You are simply stubborn—contumacious—pig-headed. Oh, you dear woman!" I ended with a groan.

Her response was a smile, a smile that was maddening. It was so tender and intimate and affectionate; yet, as far as results went, my wooing was being as certainly rejected as if I were the most objectionable creature alive.

"Come, Mr. Ferris," she said with an attempt at lightness, "Let's be agreeable while we may. I must confess to having a very slight curiosity this morning in Mr. Strang and what he may reveal, or any of the rest of it. Its importance has shrunk to nothing in my mind. It is solely for your sake that I am consenting to stay."

Hers was a small enough concession; but I was grasping at straws, and a spark of hope sprang in my bosom that something might happen to soften her unyielding attitude.

We went out to breakfast together. She was uniformly gentle and kind and sweet-tempered, as if she were resolved that nothing I might say or do would be allowed to offend or disturb her. But we had little enough to say to each other. The situation was become too monstrously serious for speech, or even for lucid thought.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

JAMES STRANG OF JOHORE BAHRU.

STRANG and Struber were waiting at the office when Lois and I got back, and we all went at once into my private room.

A pleased glow went thru me when she drew her old chair around to my side of the desk and seated herself close by me. But at once my despondency rushed back again. The act was an unconscious expression of our changed relations: a token that the old happy comradeship was no more, and that there was nothing else to take its place save emptiness, loneliness and heart hunger.

Much to my relief, Struber showed no inclination to crow over the successful outcome of the affair, as I had expected he would—for, from his standpoint, it was successful. His face remained fixed in a contented grin, but he seemed satisfied with a husky reminder to me: "I told yuh to keep your eye on your Uncle Heinie. Didn't I fill on the draw? Well, I should worry!"

Strang's bright little eyes watched Lois intently, but his curiosity was not rude, and he was careful to avert his gaze whenever she glanced in his direction. He and the detective were whispering together while she was seating herself, and I wondered at the curious expression with which his fierce eyes regarded her.

Struber abruptly swung around and fired a question at me.

"Say, when you were in the auto with Farlin, didn't your scrap with the Chinks end mighty sudden?"

"Why, yes," I replied; "about as suddenly as it began."

"How many were there?"

"To the best of my belief, four. I'm not sure."

"Not countin' the one under the carpet. Uh-huh, I see. Now, then, where's the ring?"

Not since the episode at the ivory booth had I once thought of it. My gaze fell mechanically to my hands. The ring was gone.

Still grinning, squinting at me between half closed lids, Struber nodded his head in a satisfied way.

"We found four dead Chinks scattered round over San Felipe; every blamed one had the death mark printed somewheres on his mug, an' they were the deadest bunch o' Chinks I ever saw."

As evidence of my changed mental state, I may set down that the significance of Struber's words sent a dull glow of exultation thru me instead of the shuddering hofror I would have felt had the incident occurred a few days earlier.

"My chief regret is," I savagely told him, "that I didn't get a few more—Lao Wing Fu, particularly."

Strang interposed:

"If you knew everything, you wouldn't feel so sore against Lao. Don't forget that after all he's a Chinaman."

"I shan't," returned I, glumly. "May the good Lord deliver me from any similar afflictions in the future."

"Well," Struber went on, "they'd a-got you or Harry if you hadn't a-got them first. Yuh know the kind o' cannon a Chink generally packs—big enough to hunt elephants with. They all had at least one apiece an' enough wire-edged butcher-knives among 'em to fill a morgue. The guy on the floor o' the auto that Farlin slugged—that Chink was there to fix you—must a-come to an' grabbed the ring. Mebbe it slipped off your finger."

I got up and went over to where my light overcoat hung.

"The box, too," I informed him, feeling the pockets. "It's gone."

"Do yuh get what that means?" he asked. "Every one o' the signs we know about's gone—all the boxes, the ring, Miss Fox's tattoo-mark—an' Lao along with 'em. He's got what he wants, an' until we nail him we'll hear no more from him."

It might as well be set down here that Lao Wing Fu never was "nailed," and only once again did any of us ever hear from him, and then only indirectly, as described in a postcript to the following chapter. The ease with which he evaded the police, it is also worth recording, afforded a significant commentary on the scope of his power and influence.

Each added development threw a fresh sidelight upon this extraordinary Chinaman's resourcefulness, cunning and genius for trickery. It was simply by a process of deduction from what was certainly known, by filling in the facts at hand with what was obviously required to make a perfect whole, that we were able to arrive at some of our conclusions. Our earlier hypotheses, it will be seen, were in the main correct, failing principally in a lack of detail.

For example, it must have been thru the instrumentality of a plot hatched by Lao Wing Fu that Steve Willetts' escape from San Quentin and his eloquent avoidance of the police were so successfully and easily accomplished, tho the charge could not be certainly fastened upon its author. From our Chinese prisoner—the one who promised to respond to third-degree treatment—it was learned that from the outset Steve matched his cunning against Lao's—tried to "double-cross" him, to quote Struber. Steve's checkered career in China had given him a facility in the use of the language and an acquaintance with habits and customs that enabled him to mislead and circumvent the white police, if not the race whose outward aspects he assumed as a disguise.

Even with the advantages pointed out, however, he could not have fared far, of course, without material assistance and support, and this was given him by one of the numerous secret societies, or tongs, that infest all our Chinese communities. There was at least one of these—the Hop Sings—that was not wholly amenable to Lao's authority. They were perhaps the most desperate and murderous gang of highbinders that have ever played a part in fomenting trouble in Pacific coast Chinatowns. It was peculiarly fitting that these thugs should have furnished Steve with an asylum and lent him their aid.

Here now arises a detail that had done much to add to our mystification; that had presented the most baffling obstacles to finding a motive. Lois and I were not alone the targets of Lao's conspiracy and the stratagems growing out of it; Steve's attempt to get the best of Lao made us also his victims, so thus we stood between two fires. But in the end Lao found revenge for the outlaw's ingratitude; he planned, with the aid of his allies among the Hop Sings, the robbery of my safe, and Steve's greed led him blindly into the trap.

In this connection, it had been members of the Hop Sings that helped Steve burglarize my office; it had been Hop Sing confederates of his that burglarized Strang's room; but Lao and his tools had been responsible for my enforced automobile ride, the ransacking of my room, the theft of the ivory box from my desk, and for Mrs. Fox's death and the theft of her box. The Hop Sings, it must be understood, wanted only the diamond, while Lao Wing Fu was animated, first, by a desire for the ring and everything bearing the ideograph, the stone being only of secondary importance. As shall appear presently, he was also impelled by still a third motive.

Among this state of affairs Steve had to move warily, for among the Hop Sings were many who were also allied with Lao's still more powerful tong; and it was only in those few individuals whom Steve could personally interest and inspire thru motives of greed or fear, that he could impose any measure of confidence.

To account for the foregoing conditions and to explain adequately all the circumstances growing out of them, it is now necessary to take up the narrative of James Strang, otherwise Samuel

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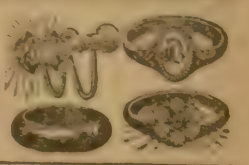

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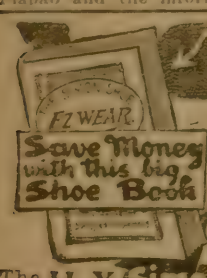

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Willets, and consider it as briefly as possible, simply elucidating such details as have not already been made clear.

"I'd never thought o' Steve trying to murder me," Strang met this belief with eyes that glowed under their thatch of brows, "but I guess you're not far wrong. Fact o' the matter is, back in them days neither had a shade on the other for wildness and downright deviltry. We both had devil's tempers, too, an' it was a common thing for us to whale each other and afterwards make up.

"No, sir, it was not Steve trying to murder me that made me light out. It was this way. My father was a renter on a tract o' poor land among the San Pedro hills, when ranching wasn't what it is nowadays round about Los Angeles. There's where he raised his family. Steve an' I'd just about reached fryin'-size when we both fell in love with a pretty Mexican girl." He paused and chuckled reminiscently. "Gosh! I've forgot her name. But at the time I thought the end of the world had come, so I up and lit out, aiming to keep on going the rest o' my days. By an' by I drifted to China, but for the past six years or so I've stuck pretty close to Johore Bahru and the Straits Settlements. I've made my pile, and if I do say it myself, I'm one o' the rich, influential men o' the lower Peninsula."

His alliance with my father came about in the most natural way imaginable. Both men were young and enterprising; Strang had a knack of digging up opportunities for financial profit, and he had the time; my father's time was pretty well taken up by his business, but he had some capital which Strang lacked. Besides, father never learned to speak Chinese, which, Strang told us, "Steve and I picked up as easy as swearin'."

Lao Wing Fu the two learned to know thru various business deals.

"We trusted him more than most Chinks," Strang explained. "You mustn't get the idea that he's an out an' out crook, because he isn't. He simply goes according to the Chink way o' looking at things, which isn't a white man's by a whole lot.

"For several years, while I was making Hong-kong my headquarters, I was still Samuel Willets. But like the bad penny he was, Steve turned up, an' about the first thing he does is land me in a peck o' trouble with the British authorities. It was a matter o' opium running that I needn't go into here more than to say it was the first lot I ever shipped to old Beef Hardwick at Honolulu. He used to run it into Frisco in the hold of his old schooner, the Mary Kenton. That was a good many years ago, but see how all these things are mixed up together. Mary was the daughter o' Beef's partner, Anthony J. Kenton, an old-time Frisco merchant and pillar o' the church, an' she married Beef. She was Meyer Hardwick's mother. Anthony J. an' Beef founded what is now the Kenton-Hardwick Company, the biggest importing concern of Chinese an' Oriental products in the U. S. Beef an' old Anthony's both cashed in long ago; but I own nearly half o' the Kenton-Hardwick stock, besides looking after the Eastern end o' the business.

"But the point's this"—he chuckled: "Meyer Hardwick's fortune smells o' opium, an' he'd sooner have anybody think his father'd been a pirate than to have that found out. But, pshaw! That used to be the proper way o' making money quick; it only needed a little nerve. Why, your father an' I, now—But we haven't time to go into that.

"I had to light out o' Hongkong, an' it was a good many months before I was free to come an' go there openly. There's some parts o' China where I'm still remembered as Sam Willets; but for the most part I'm Jim Strang, o' Johore Bahru."

"Major Hector Sylvester was a crony o' your father's, tho I never got acquainted with him till the time o' the Tibet expedition. Peter B. Ferris an' Major Sylvester were in a set that a rough beach-comber like me didn't have anything in common with, tho o' course Peter B., an' I were together a whole lot in a business way. The time came, tho, when the two o' them together had use for me—you can bet your sweet life they did!

"It came about in this way: For years, off an' on, I'd been hearing about a whale of a big diamond that was said to be somewhere up in the Kham country. It was kept as a sort o' fetish in one o' their lamaseries. It was a rough stone, but worth the pickings of a province. Never got anything very definite, y' understand, nor didn't often hear the thing mentioned at all—just a word here an' a word there while I was trading round at different places. But after a while I got to noticing that every time a caravan came down from Li-kiang or Ching-too, somebody from it sooner or later would drift into Canton with fresh stories o' this wonderful diamond, or else I'd stumble across some one who'd recently heard about it from some one else.

"So it went on until it came to me that there must be fire where there was so much smoke, an' I went to investigating in earnest on my own hook.

"For a time I could dig up nothing more definite than the fairy stories I'd already heard over an' over again. I was still under cover for the Hongkong matter, boarding with a friend o' mine named Luey Chang, a Cantonese silk merchant. My disguise wouldn't fool a Chink; I didn't aim for it to; but I could slip in an' out o' Hongkong now an' then without worrying much over whether I was due to be nabbed.

"One night Luey came to my room to tell me there was a man in the shop who might tell me something about my diamond. 'What does he want?' was my first question. It's not for nothing that a Chink comes volunteering even a little thing like information. 'He comes seeking you,' says Luey. Says I: 'If he's not a bloody Britisher bent on persecuting an honest trader, show him in.'

"Luey swore by the shades of his illustrious ancestors for a thousand generations back that he could vouch for his 'cousin.' 'We are of noble blood,' Luey told me. His father, I gathered, was a kwan who'd run afoul o' the government an' had his property confiscated.

"'What's the chap's name?' I asked. 'Lao Wing Fu,' says Luey. 'Why didn't you say so at first?' says I. 'Show him in.'

"Y' see, I already knew Lao as a pretty shrewd young chap who'd had some dealings with your father as well as me; but I supposed him to be in Nanking or Shanghai, which, I want to say, is a long ways from Canton. Lao told me he'd been on my trail for months. An' then he gave me the first real, simon-pure information about the diamond I'd so far stumbled across—made it at last seem real.

"He told me he'd heard in one way an' another about my interest in the stone, an' that circumstances were such that he might help me to it—if I'd help him to something he wanted.

"'Where is this amazing diamond?' I asked him. I hadn't an idea he'd tell me, but when he answered up prompt I saw why there was no reason to keep the place secret. 'It's at Tao-fu,' says he; an' as far as getting at it was concerned, he might as well 've said the North Pole, or the Tower o' London along with the crown jewels.

"In them days nobody knew anything about the Tibet country to speak of—an' they know blamed little now. The country's sprinkled over with lamaseries—homes o' the Buddhist monks an' nuns, y' know. These lamaseries are usually perched 'way up on some mountain-peak, an' the lamas, being a suspicious, inhospitable set, don't invite calls from strangers.

"Well, the lamasery o' Tao-fu was in a class by itself. Ages ago it hatched out a brand o' belief that stirred up all kinds o' persecution from the orthodox Lamaists; but o' late years its creed had begun to trickle down thru the rest o' China, spreading over the whole country until it developed into a powerful secret society, half religious an' half political in nature—something like the Jesuits, you know.

"Those chaps believe they have a perfect right to kill anybody who's done 'em a wrong, an' you can see how a gang o' men with political ambitions, who can persuade a big enough following o' the populace to agree with 'em, can get about everything they're a mind to go after. The whole country at this time was infested with Taofuism, an' aside from getting within reaching distance o' the diamond, the idea o' trying to appropriate any o' their sacred relics didn't just exactly fill me with enthusiasm.

"There'd been considerable talk about the English government sending an exploring party into Tibet, an' to that end negotiations had been under way at Pekin for several months. Lao said he had it straight that if the expedition ever started, Sylvester would be in command. He an' his wife had big reputations as explorers, an' in the nature o' things they were bound to get somewhere close to Tao-fu.

"'What is it you want?' I by an' by asked Lao.

"'It is like this, Illustrious One,' he says. 'When the expedition starts I want to go with it. Your friendship with Kwan Ferris can get me a billet as interpreter. I know the Lh'asan an' Drupa dialects.'

"'That ought to make it easy, then,' I told him. 'But why you want to go at all,' I says, 'is beyond me.'

"He sat studying a bit; then his answer made me sit up an' pay strict attention. Says he: 'There are things in this world greater than diamonds; the greatest of them lies at the lamasery o' Tao-fu. I want it.'

"'Not unless you're a pretty big gun among the Tao-fus,' I said, 'can you ever hope to succeed in such a crazy undertaking.' You see, I wanted to make sure of an idea he'd given me.

"'There is much,' he says, 'that must remain unspoken between me an' you. Tao-fu is far out o' the world to be the source o' spiritual guidance for the Thrice-blessed One's children. I hold a commission. But this must remain a secret between us.'

"'Enough,' I says. 'I'll get word to Kwan Ferris at once.'

"Six days later Peter B. Ferris, Lao Wing Fu an' I were sitting with our

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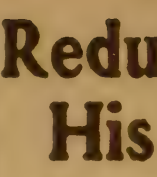

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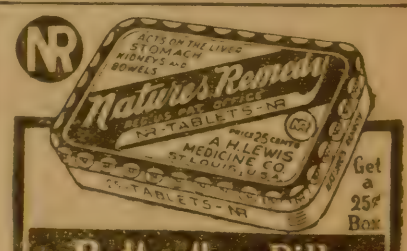

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heads together in my room at Luey Chang's.

"'Funny thing,' says your father, 'but Syl an' I've had some talk about this same diamond.' Then he went on to tell me how centuries before a king of Nepal had sent the diamond to a dalailama as some kind o' offering, but that it had only caused trouble because it'd been stolen from a Buddhist temple somewhere in India, an' the king o' Nepal had no more right to it than any o' us had. Major Sylvester got it all out o' some old record.

"Well, the upshot o' the whole thing was that when the expedition started Lao an' I went with it. If he got the diamond, the four of us was to have equal shares in it."

CHAPTER XXIX.

LOIS CHANGES HER MIND.

STRANG'S narrative of the expedition into Tibet would fill a volume. Recounted to us from time to time before his return to the Far East, in the matter-of-fact tone one might employ in describing the most ordinary of everyday events, it grew into a wonderful chronicle of a stupendous undertaking; but I am obliged to confine myself to those details that are necessary to make everything clear.

For centuries the Tao-fu lamasery had been the shrine of the sect's most sacred relic. This was a ring of great antiquity, which in reality was nothing more than an ingenious instrument for making assassination safe and easy. It was venerated in a phrase that signified "The Kiss of the Silent Death," and whenever a victim was marked for punishment a "Bearer of the Kiss" was chosen by lot and sent forth to carry out the decree of the order. In the course of weeks, or perhaps months, a conspicuous figure in the nation's government, maybe some powerful viceroy or mandarin, or maybe only an obscure merchant or artisan, would be found dead with a strange sign upon his forehead, which the people had learned to dread as betokening the visitation of a swift and mysterious end. The "Kiss" was bestowed upon rich and poor, lofty and humble, with exact impartiality. It was this ring, investing its possessor with leadership, which Lao Wing Fu had been empowered to wrest from the remote and all but inaccessible lamasery of Tao-fu.

It was here I took occasion to ask Strang whether he understood the significance of the ideograph on the jade seal.

"Had trouble finding anybody who could read it, eh?" he returned. "Well, maybe that's because it belongs to the old form o' symbol writing, the kind that was in vogue when the ring was made."

He pulled his chair up to my desk and on the back of an old envelope drew the character on the ring with a pencil.

"In the ancient Chinese writings," he explained, "that means 'dead,' 'to die,' 'death.'"

During the first few days which the expedition, or what remained of it, rested at Tao-fu, Lao was treated by the lamas with all the deference his standing as a Tao-fu leader entitled him to. Thus he had ample opportunity to perfect a plan for seizing both the ring and the diamond.

Masquerading as one of the interpreters was a young fellow who was a skilled carver in ivory—none other than the present old man I had encountered at the bazaar—who was set to manufacturing a number of replicas of the reliquary in which the ring was kept. When the plot was perfected one of these replicas was given to each of five different messengers; Lao seized both ring and diamond, and the five messengers were sent out of the country over as many different routes, their purpose being to keep the pursuit on a false trail as long as possible. It was, in very truth, a desperate undertaking, but at this stage Lao Wing Fu's authority was supreme and unquestioned by the worn-out handful of men. The unfortunate individuals thus chosen were persuaded to accept their charges only because their one chance of escape was thus afforded. To refuse meant certain death at the hands of the maddened lamas and the savage hillmen, who, in a sense, were their vassals.

"Because my box had the diamond in in," Strang whimsically observed, "looked like poor pay for trying to get out o' that hornet's nest with a footy little ivory box. But, by heck, I did it! Three o' the five got thru, all told. There were mighty good reasons why we never wanted our names to appear as survivors; but o' course it got to be known in time."

Meanwhile Lao was having his hands full persuading the lamas that he was blameless for the despoiling of the lamasery of its sacred relics—tho by comparison the loss of the diamond was of such minor importance that no attempt was made to recover it, all efforts being aimed toward regaining the ring. Thus it was that every member of the party, except Lao and three of the five he contrived to save by sending away with the boxes, were slain by the frenzied priests and their savage followers and their bodies brutally mutilated. The scene is too terrible to dwell upon.

It was true that Major Sylvester entrusted his daughter to Lao Wing Fu—just as one in an extreme emergency will leap at the only chance, however hopeless, of a way out. But Lao proved to be the party's savior more than once. At a word or sign from him the most threatening opposition would melt away; labor or assistance of any sort would appear as if by magic when most sorely needed, and always the way was smoothed until the fatal moment when he himself brought down destruction upon their heads.

James Strang shall be allowed to tell in his own language the most important disclosure of all.

"You get a glimpse o' the queer workings o' the Oriental mind. Where any white man would have been as helpless as the baby that had been thrust on him, what does this darn Chink do but deliberately try to get back to civilization with his burden! Yes, siree! Believe it or not, he undertook that very thing. He forced a couple o' Jyade women to abandon their own babies, an' with only a half-dozen yaks to carry supplies, he an' the two women and the baby started east in the hope o' making Ching-too in the Sze Chuen country.

"Nearly three years went by before I even learned that Lao Wing Fu had won thru, an' it was the scamp of a brother who brought me the news at Hongkong. He'd learned about the diamond from Lao, an' say, the questions he asked me about it would've given a lawyer points. Your father an' I had just got back from Amsterdam with it, where it had been cut and polished an' where we were told by diamond sharps that it was easily worth twenty thousand pounds, sterling.

"Remained now to find Lao Wing Fu, market the stone, an' divide the proceeds among three instead o' four, poor Sylvester being out of our calculations.

"Lao was at Pekin, Steve told me, holding down some sort o' government billet an' odd times attending the university. A number o' things happened about this time, an' Peter B. an' I were led astray by what we took for granted an' by failing to take into account the fact that Lao Wing Fu never had had cause to mistrust Steve. You can bet it wasn't Steve's fault. Steve was my brother; he was as much at home with the Chinese language, customs and habits as a squirrel in a corn-crib, an' smart as Lao was, Steve got round him to some extent—how far I didn't learn

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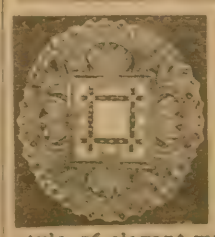

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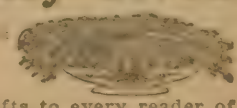

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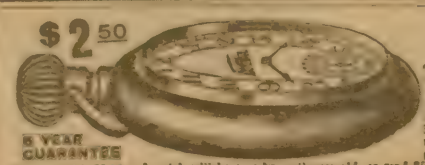

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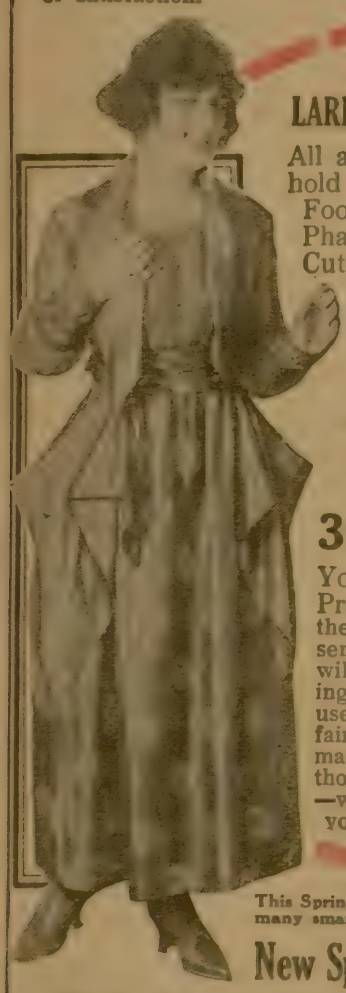

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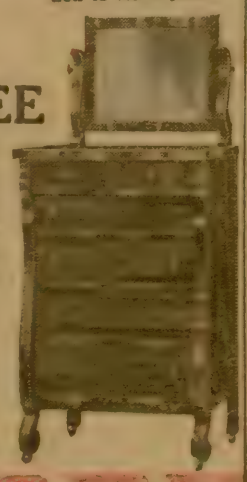

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till just lately. Keep this all in mind while I tell what followed.

"We sent word to Lao at Pekin, then opened negotiations with a Cingalese diamond merchant at Singapore—chap I knew. No use going into that, tho. Your father an' I started for Singapore from Hongkong with the diamond. He an' I arrived safe an' sound, but the diamond was missing. So was Steve. I never have seen Steve since then—but once. I never saw the diamond again until a few weeks ago.

"While we were pretty certain Steve was implicated in the stone's loss, we always half-way believed Lao was at the bottom of it. An' him—he thought we two 'white foreign devils' had cheated him out o' his share. For years he held it against us.

"So it came about that thru all the years since the diamond was lost, Lao Wing Fu has kept his mouth shut about Marian Sylvester."

All at once, for no cause at all apparently, I was hanging onto my chair-arms as if my very existence depended upon not letting them get away from me. A tingle and thrill ran thru me, as if those same chair-arms were the electrodes of a galvanic battery. I turned like an automaton and stared at Lois. She was regarding me with a wide-eyed, frightened look, her bearing and expression accurately—and comically, when viewed now in retrospect—reflecting my own overwhelming emotions.

I heard Strang chuckling in high good humor with himself at the surprise he was about to spring, which the exigencies of his narrative allowed him to keep back no longer.

"Yes, Mr. Ferris," he was saying, "That's the young lady herself—Miss Marian Sylvester, of Yalung, Tibet—sole heiress to a tidy fortune in England, that's been piling up interest for more'n twenty years, not saying anything about her share in a pretty chunk o' crystal that's worth around twenty thousand pounds."

How long we thus contemplated each other I don't know; but after a while the high tension of the moment subsided, and I found words to say to her:

"My dear, this is not so much a revelation as a confirmation—a confirmation of all my beliefs in you. You see, now, how I have been justified."

She did not respond in words, but the tender, affectionate light in her gray eyes was eloquent enough.

Both Struber and Strang were conscious that the situation was become tinctured with a new and potent influence that subordinated the importance of the disclosures in which, until now, we had been so absorbed. Both grew restive and ill at ease, and the recital proceeded swiftly, if dispiritedly, to its conclusion by a series of short-cuts.

And what followed up to the time Struber and Strang left us alone together comes back to me now like the flitting, disordered, inconsequential pictures of an old dream, and I am able to set down the details as I subsequently got them sorted out.

Accordingly, therefore, before starting from Tao-fu, Lao Wing Fu tattooed the symbol upon little Marian's throat, his purpose being to place her under the protection of a seal that would render her safe against all molestation during the long journey back to wherever or whatever circumstances might designate as their ultimate destination. Then with a paradoxical premeditation that was the acme of cunning, the ring in its ivory reliquary was kept constantly concealed upon the innocent baby's person until the little party was well within a zone of safety.

How far he was justified in adopting this stratagem can be evidenced only by the facts. The wonderful white babe that bore miraculously upon its throat the dread sign, coming out of a land of mystery whence a white child had never come before, was regarded with a superstitious awe which proved to be her salvation. The relic's real hiding place never occurred to the searchers and far from laying profane hands upon Lao Wing Fu's helpless charge, it was shown every attention that primitive resources could provide.

When the two came face to face in my office, is it to be wondered at that some dormant sense of recognition in the girl's subconscious mind should have stirred and tried feebly to span the years?

When, with the diamond's disappearance, Lao believed my father and Strang were trying to defraud him of his share in the gem, he resolved to retaliate by placing Major Hector Sylvester's daughter beyond the reach of whomever might be interested in settling her father's estate and finding his heir. Steve Willets' flight with the stolen diamond fell in admirably with Lao's plans—and, incidentally, with Steve's. Steve was not averse to getting possession of what he looked upon as another rich prize, especially when Lao was willing to defray all expenses of his and the child's transportation to America, which included a nurse for little Marian, who was now nearly three years old.

Then shortly followed Lao's own political difficulties and his hurried flight to America.

"Your father believed Lao knew more about the diamond's disappearance than anybody else," Strang added by way of explanation, "so he seized every scrap o' his personal belongings he could lay his two hands on. Among them were two o' the ivory boxes, one containing the ring, which Peter B. kept; I got the other, which was empty. The diamond later was mailed to you in it.

Several years elapsed before Lao Wing Fu was able to begin a search for Marian, and in the meantime many obstacles had arisen that made the prosecution of such a search extremely difficult. Steve's crimes and misdemeanors had landed him in prison for life, and no directing information could be obtained from him; Lao was unable to discover any trace of Lois, Willets, Steve's and Sam's sister, who, of course, was now Mrs. James Fox and no longer living in San Francisco. But with unflagging patience and persistency, Lao never ceased his efforts to find his erstwhile charge. And then, by and by, his influence began to grow and expand, even as it had in China, and with it came increasing opportunities to pursue his quest.

James Strang, in recalling this portion of the past, held to a deep-seated conviction that the Chinaman was sincerely attached to the child, upon whom he looked as a sacred charge, regarding her welfare as an obligation not to be lightly fulfilled.

The previous night, it was Strang's firm belief, Lao had meant to tell Lois the whole story, as far as possible explain his reasons for wanting the tattoo-mark obliterated, and thus try to win her consent to its removal. But to secure the requisite privacy without exciting her alarm and suspicion had been next to impossible until circumstances played directly into his hands. He was provided with the opportunity of talking to Lois under the best of conditions, and furthermore, unsuspected by her, of using her disappearance as a decoy to get me in his power with the ring and the reliquary. The hour had struck when he must have them, and extreme measures had to be resorted to. He would not have harmed Lois, Strang averred; but he might have brought about my murder without a scruple, if I had refused to give up the ring and the reliquary.

However, this program was interrupted, as we know, by Struber having met and followed Farlin and me.

Tao-fuism had been spreading not alone among the Pacific Coast and other Chinese colonies of America, but with changing conditions, it was once more coming into its own in China. Lao's rank made it imperative that he recover the symbol of his authority, which my father had seized at the time of the other's flight from China, and remove all others that were being carelessly left to the disposition of chance. But Peter B. Ferris was dead, and what had become of the ring? Occurred then Charley Yen's death, and the trail was indicated to him, tho for a time he hesitated to approach me, and did not do so until obliged to. Events in which he was secretly a principal participant were rapidly drawing to a head in China and he was all at once forced to act quickly.

Straightway, however, he was opposed by another serious disadvantage: radical difference of race made it very difficult for him to recover the boxes and the ring without (in his estimation) involving the likely hazard of betraying their significance. So he went about trying to gather them in after his own peculiar methods.

It must not be lost sight of that for more than twenty years Strang and Lao Wing Fu, deceived and misguided by what they believed to be the true state of affairs, entertained a hostile and suspicious attitude toward each other. With true Oriental patience and impassivity, Lao bided his time, believing the opportunity to get even would sooner or later present itself; but the fact that the diamond never appeared between the time of its loss and the meeting between Lao and Strang at Johore Bahru in November, in a measure had prepared the minds of each for openness to conviction regarding the other's innocence.

The two then directed their suspicions toward Steve Willets, a life prisoner in San Quentin, and canvassed the situation from this point of view. For some time Lao's influence had enabled him to communicate with Steve thru the medium of the "grapevine" telegraph that constitutes a connecting-link between every prison and the outside world. Unsuccessfully he had sought information that would put him upon the trail of Marian Sylvester. Steve was wily and evasive. Life prisoners sometimes were pardoned, and then the missing heiress would prove a most valuable asset. Steve had contrived to keep informed respecting his putative daughter's whereabouts and condition, but he was not taking Lao into his confidence, even tho the latter was holding out the tempting hint of a possible jail delivery. So Lao was merely fed with facts that stopped just short of enabling him positively to identify Marian. If he could learn certainly about the tattoo-mark—But how was a Chinaman to go about that?

Steve tried to make Lao believe that Lois was in reality his daughter; and when Strang, after the November meeting, wrote Hardwick warning him to be cautious about Lois (of whom Strang at the time could know nothing definite).

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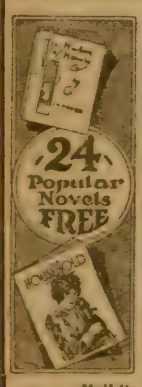

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and when this warning was followed immediately on Lao's return to Los Angeles by another from him, to the effect that Lois' presence might be part of a blackmailing scheme that threatened all sorts of dire calamities to Kenton-Hardwick, Meyer Hardwick was thrown into a panic which was openly manifested by his blunt dismissal of the innocent and unsuspecting girl.

So many important eventualities were set in motion by Strang's and Lao's meeting in November, eventualities which, in working to an inevitable end disrupted the even tenor of our lives, Lois' and mine, that it was a pity the meeting could not have happened years before. As another instance, when the two became reasonably certain that Steve had taken the diamond to California along with little Marian, Lao immediately resolved upon starting the conspiracy which was soon to effect the bandit's escape. A degenerate and irresponsible Steve Willets at liberty to pursue his erratic inclinations, would in time expose what a Steve Willetts confined could so easily keep concealed. After which Steve could be removed without jeopardy.

Then, too, Strang was in possession of facts that Lao Wing Fu did not have. If Steve had stolen the diamond, the fact that it had not since reappeared argued that he had hidden it; if so, where?

James Strang thought he knew.

He became active at once. First of all, Hardwick was privately and guardedly warned by letter against Lois. There was the old underground traffic in opium upon which their fortunes had been built, respecting which nobody was better informed than Steve Willets. And Strang was unsparing of the cables. Within a week or two he had gathered together a mass of information which made him more than suspect Lois' real identity, and led him to extend to the United States an already projected trip to England. He brought with him the ivory box in his possession, because it bore in its pattern the distinctive symbol of death, a mark that would establish the girl's identity beyond peradventure.

He had informed himself about myself, too. He arrived at Los Angeles on the day he notified Lois of, determined to lose not a minute's time in recovering the diamond and presenting himself with it and the ivory box at my office.

He secured a room at the Republic, on an impulse registered his true name, then boarded a car for San Pedro. Among the hills on the old home place was a certain ravine; in that ravine was a cave which, in the old days, had been known only to his brother and himself; in one of the cave's concealed walls was a small concealed niche that had been the hiding place of plundered treasure many a time during the period of their youthful maraudings. While pondering over the matter of the missing diamond this old hiding place had recurred to James Strang. He went straight to it, thrust a hand into the recess and drew out a small package which once had been tightly wrapped in oiled silk. Now, however, the fabric was rotting and falling away; but inside it reposed the diamond, undimmed and unharmed.

He crawled out of the cave, and a second later came face to face with—not a Chinaman, as at first believed, but Steve. With a roar of fury, the disguised fugitive plunged at him, and the quiet, secluded ravine became the scene of a terrific combat.

The very fierceness of Steve's onslaught, however, defeated its purpose. Strang was sent hurtling down the steep incline, and before Steve, with more regard for his own bones, could come up with him again, he had won the highway and the open, where the other dared not press him.

As a result of this narrow escape, Strang was obliged to remain under cover at San Pedro until near nightfall, nursing his bruised body.

When he started on his return to Los Angeles he discovered that he was surrounded by a veritable cloud of Chinese. While seeming unaware of his presence and to be intent only upon their own affairs, they were colliding with him at every turn, pressing against him at every halt, so that he arrived at the hotel in a condition of nervous strain that left him, as he expressed it, "in the right frame o' mind to take it out on some one." The ransacked room afforded the last straw; but his aches and bruises restricted the taking-out process to an upbraiding of Corrigan, the hotel manager.

Alone at last in the new room to which he had been transferred, he began fully to realize the seriousness of the situation confronting him. In a little while he formed a pretty accurate conception of the true state of affairs: Steve had escaped from prison; he knew Chinese nature, their genius for concealment, for acting secretly in the dark, and he knew it would be hopeless to appeal to the police with the fantastic story he would have to offer to account for his fears. It was too late to find me at my office, and he dreaded going abroad with the diamond in his possession. He could not even open his door without seeing a Chinaman somewhere in the hall; the reflection that they were hotel servants did not in the least restore his peace of mind.

It was now clear that Steve meant to have the diamond at any cost, and that he had at his beck and call any number of dangerous allies against whom a solitary stand would be hopeless. Out of this predicament grew the idea of mailing the diamond to me and accompanying it with a letter of explanation, which he would follow in person as soon as it was possible for him to do so.

How he was assaulted and dragged into an alley when he went forth to hunt a letter-box; how he succeeded in dropping into it the parcel but not the letter, which was taken from him; how his assailants were finally routed, and himself, now seriously injured, crawled into a cab and was driven to the only haven he could think of—Meyer Hardwick's residence—must all be passed over. For days he was confined to his room, fretting over the gem's fate. The letter, of course, had been taken to Steve, and Steve would know where the diamond had been sent, whether or not it reached its destination. Therefore Hardwick's machine was pressed into service and a guard of private detectives followed me until Strang was satisfied that I was no longer in danger from the Hop Sings and his desperate brother. By means of the personal he cautioned me against Steve's similar method of trying to entrap me into a betrayal of having the diamond in my possession. And at last, when he had about made up his mind that he was well enough to leave his retreat and pay me the long-deferred call, Struber had found him.

Strang turned aside to indulge in a brief digression.

"Was Lao far-seeing, or only a lucky dog? His success made him head o' the tong. An' then the time came when he had to skip so sudden that he left behind everything he owned except the clothes he was wearing at the time. It looked like total failure and complete disaster; but, by gosh! just see how things've worked out!

"But look here. What I was going to say was this: It wasn't long after that before the Tao-fus were the most active figures in the government. Many o' the leaders lost their heads in more ways than one, but Lao saved his by lighting out for America, an' it looks to a man up a tree as if he'd guessed right. He worked for the dynasty all thru the recent revolution, an' now when it's beginning to look like the battered old empire was caught in the tolls of a despotism worse than any it ever knew, he recovers his badge of authority an' goes hiking back to China. Republic? Huh! To those who know anything o' the inside workings o' Chinese politics the word has been made a joke of."

The instant Lois and I were alone together she became the victim of an unaccountable agitation. It was manifested by a shyness and confusion that heightened her color and magnified the sheer loveliness of her until I, watching her eagerly, longingly, thrilled in every nerve and fiber of my being.

Her suddenly awakened timidity impelled her to the performance of some unaccountable, purposeless acts, as, for example, flashing at me an inscrutable, glowing glance half-veiled by her long lashes, and moving toward the door, as if she were about to depart herself, but coming back instead and replacing her chair in its proper place on the opposite side of my table-desk. Then she started toward the door again.

I stood up and called to her softly.

"Lois!"

She sent an arch look back at me across her shoulder, which was at once an invitation and a dare; but she did not pause until her hand was upon the knob.

"Where are you going?" I asked, and when she did not answer, "You know you really do not intend going at all—anywhere. Lois, come and sit down—here—please." I pointed to her chair.

She came slowly and paused with the desk between us.

"You have no right to call me that," she said in a low, constrained voice, not meeting my look.

"Oh, haven't I!" I retorted. "My beautiful dear, your last defense has been swept away. You see how fragile it was—a rope of sand. It frightened me like the very dickens, tho, while you were in earnest."

Still her eyes were downcast, but her bosom was rising and falling in a turbulent fashion, and the slender gloved hands were playing aimlessly, tremulously, with the papers on my desk.

"I am Miss Marian Sylvester," she said in a weak voice, "of—of—of that Lung place in Tibet."

"Nonsense!" said I. "You can no longer dismay me, you dear, glorious girl. You shall be Lois to me—Lois Fox—all the days of my life."

Some loose typewritten sheets—some that she herself had prepared only the day before—went suddenly sliding from beneath her fingers to the floor.

"Look how you're mussing up the Davies bill of exceptions!" I exclaimed inanely.

Our eyes met and she laughed—a low, rich, throaty laugh that was the most beautiful music in the world. Her lovely countenance was transfigured. After a long pause she whispered:

"I shall always—I hope—be Lois to you."

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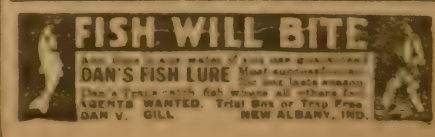

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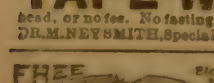

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MONEY

one; but by resting our hands upon it—somewhere about the center—with mine enclosing hers, and by leaning toward each other, we discovered that we could kiss across its top without the least discomfort.

EPILOGUE.

IF, IN the minds of those who have followed the fortunes of the diamond thus far, has been kindled a curiosity respecting its ultimate fate, I believe I am warranted in going beyond the logical end of my story to gratify a pardonable wish to learn more about it. Besides, the circumstances surrounding its passing out of our lives are not altogether without interest in themselves.

Before James Strang started on his return to Johore Bahru, we agreed among ourselves—Strang, Lois and I—to entrust the stone to Johannes Aartsen, he to dispose of it for the best price obtainable.

In our deliberations, however, we were confronted by a perplexity that gave us any amount of trouble and mental worry. By the early agreement among my father, James Strang, Major Hector Sylvester and Lao Wing Fu, the last-named was entitled to a quarter interest in whatever sum might be realized from a sale, and how to get it to him, and at the same time leave ourselves free from possible future complications, if he should be of a mind to question our act or demand an accounting, was a difficulty we were unable satisfactory to get rid of. But the matter was settled for us in a quite surprising fashion. We expected the disposal of such a gem would require months if not years of preliminary exploiting and negotiating; for, as Aartsen had pointed out, not many persons could buy such a remarkable diamond out of hand. In a way, we imagined the various royalties of Europe would have to be interested, that cupidity and princely envy and jealousy would have to be excited in the minds of the richest Eastern potentates—swarthy rajahs, sultans, shahs, and pashahs with a passion for jewels—until they were set to bidding against each other, and the gem thus be made to fetch somewhere near its true worth

Scarcely, however, had Aartsen let it be known in the proper quarters that such a diamond was on the market, than he effected a sale at a price that exceeded our fondest expectations.

Who got it?

Here is the answer, as nearly as I can supply one.

Several half-hearted, tentative offers were elicited which were not seriously considered, and we had settled back to the anticipated long period of waiting, when there came another offer that definitely removed all other competitors from the field.

One day the expert rushed into my office in a high state of excitement. He threw down upon my desk a bundle of parchment plastered over with strange, fantastic seals which I recognized as Chinese. It proved to be a document couched in flowery, stilted English, and it bore the signature of Lao Wing Fu, president of the Republic's Privy Council!

The document—nothing less formal will accurately describe it—is too long to be quoted. The gist of its message was, that because of certain attributes of a religious nature immanent in the diamond, established by centuries of observance, there was only one place in the whole world where it rightly belonged; that the writer had been empowered to recover it and to pay a sum that would warrant those holding the stone in effecting as speedy a transfer as possible. The writer next pointed out his personal interest in the diamond, and wound up by making an offer that took away my breath. A draft for $500 was enclosed as evidence of good faith.

I made a quick calculation on a sheet of paper. After deducting Lao Wing Fu's one-quarter share and Aartsen's commission, the sale would realize exactly $34,500 each for Strang, Lois, and myself, which sums were ultimately placed to our accounts.

Wherever in that land of mystery the high-priests of Tao-fu hold forth, there, doubtless, is enshrined one of the world's most magnificent diamonds.

The End.

Double Crossed for Gold

(Continued From Page 13.)

was still formulating a plan of action, these brave men——" Murphy and Springler involuntarily threw out their chests—"fired a volley which winged the driver. I am sure no particular credit for bravery is due me. When he lost control of the car I conducted myself only as a man could not help doing under the circumstances."

An excited clamor of voices disclaimed this modest assertion.

Further questioning developed additional details. Marion was not surprised to learn that the wounded highgrader who had been carried upstairs was Ed Larsen.

After a consultation, Superintendent Saunders announced that he would check up the second car of captured mineral in front of the hotel, and later have the contents weighed. The crowd accordingly repaired to the open. Murphy and Springler were delegated to assist.

An exclamation of surprise came from the superintendent as the first sack to be removed was carefully opened. He bent over it closely. "Why!" he announced, straightening up in bewilderment—"this is—this is sand!"

Colonel Morningside took an involuntary step near. "Bless my soul!" he gasped.

Hastily another sack was ripped open and its contents disclosed. More sand.

Next, the two assistants gave a violent tug which resulted in exposing to view the upper part of a milk can. A few more tugs and it was poised on the edge of the load. Murphy paused to mop his perspiring brow.

"Look out!" warned several voices.

Taken off their guard the three, including Saunders, made a concerted grab at the can, but they were too late. It toppled over to the sidewalk with a resounding crash. The lid was wrenched loose and its precious contents gushed forth.

A chorus of derision went up.

"Sa-and!"

It was as if the crowd had called out: "Sold!"

Quickly and systematically the automobile was emptied. At every fresh disclosure the circle of lusty voices called in a concerted drawl:

"Sa-and!"

The ceremony had become a game, which they hugely enjoyed—tho the joke was on themselves. The gathering grew magically, the newcomers being quickly enlightened as to the meaning of it all, and lustily joining their voices in the next derisive roar.

The net results of the search were some three dozen sacks of creek sand and two heavy cans of the same content, neatly arrayed along the edge of the sidewalk.

Saunders could only stare at them in rueful perplexity. But Dugan ingeniously came to his rescue.

"This is easy. The guy what the old boy got the best of was the decoy. The game was to let him get captured, if it come to a showdown, while the one we nabbed gets away with the goods."

"Of course," agreed Saunders in a tone of relief.

The main body of the crowd, to its unmistakable disappointment, was excluded from the hotel, as the principals passed within. President Morningside obviously was in need of rest. He looked and moved like an old man, as he made for the stairs. Before he could ascend, however. Saunders hurried to his side and spoke a few words in his ear. The Colonel paused in surprise.

"The Prince!" he exclaimed, glancing around. "I—must beg to be excused. As you plainly see, I am in no condition to meet——"

But Naguchi himself prevented escape by approaching with hand extended and his characteristic beaming smile.

"I must seize opportunity, Colonel," he exclaimed, "to clasp hands for old times' sake."

Morningside hesitated—Marion thought he almost tottered in his weakness—but with an obvious effort, he recovered, mustering a feeble smile as he responded to the handclasp.

"Dear old Naguchi!" he exclaimed. "I should hardly have known you—in those American togs. But you surprised us."

"I explain, when you less tired," smiled the Japanese. "But I must congratulate, Colonel, on your braveness."

"It was nothing, Prince, nothing," depreciated the president. He again turned toward the stairs, but paused. "Would you do me the great honor to call on me in my room—in half an hour? I should like to talk over old times and——"

"A moment, please!" Erskin's peremptory tone gained him immediate attention. He addressed Colonel Morningside. "I should like to know," he said pleasantly, "how long you have been acquainted with Prince Naguchi."

The president looked surprised.

"Oh—let me see—six years," he said hesitatingly, then appealing for confirmation: "Am I right, Naguchi?"

But the next question followed before the reply could be given. "You know him, then, as Prince Naguchi, a stockholder in the Tokyo mine?"

Even from Dugan's huskies a murmur of protest arose at the questioner's tone.

"See here," interrupted Saunders, "the Colonel is tired and——"

"I must insist upon an answer," was the quiet response.

"You are d——d impertinent!" flared the president. "I do know this man as Prince Naguchi, one of our stockholders—have known him for years. What of it?"

Erskin turned to the smiling Japanese. "Are you what he claims?"

The reply came promptly. "I am not so."

Morningside opened his mouth twice

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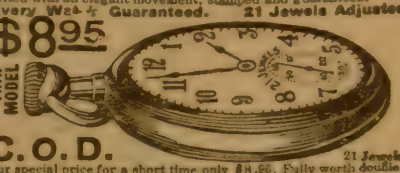

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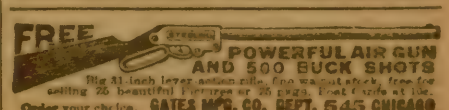

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before a sound issued.

"What is the meaning of this damnable business?" he thundered. "I denounce it as a fiendish trick."

"Exactly," replied Erskin calmly. "A trick to show you up as the fraud and fake that you are. The letter you received yesterday from Prince Naguchi was a trick to bring matters to a head—for, of course, you wouldn't dare face a showdown with the real prince. To get you to acknowledge acquaintance with my valet—whom you took to be a confederate—was part of the same trick."

"What in Heaven's name does all this mean?" burst in Merwin Saunders. "Who are you?" He turned sharply upon the erstwhile hero.

The latter, however, seemed barely able to support himself dazedly against the stair railing. With an open mouth, Detective Dugan gaped at each of the speakers in turn.

But Marion's intuition was already seven leaps ahead of man's blundering reason.

"I know!" she cried excitedly to her lover. "You! you are Colonel William Morningside!"

"Good work," he applauded in an undertone.

Saunders, tho disconcerted, quickly recovered. "Another fake?" he demanded incredulously.

"I don't in the least blame you for doubting me," was the pleasant response. "Ito, can you help us out by telling where you first saw this man?"

Like a well oiled machine, the valet spoke up. "I am in ship coming to 'Merica. Colonel Morningside, my boss, give me all papers of stockholders and mine to carry. Honorable Colonel are mistaken for German spy and must escape later; but I go on board of ship. Presently are wreck in which this fat party——" with a menacingly pleasant smile at the figure leaning heavily against the stairpost—"secure from me, by knock down in the rush, papers which I carry. I am picked from water several hours later, but he no doubt think I am drown, and also that real Colonel Morningside is overcome by same calamity."

"Instead of which," supplemented Marion, "you see, Colonel Morningside happened to be sailing from Japan under the name of Lord Erskin."

"It don't go down," interposed Dugan. "The guy here can't get away from it that we caught him making off with the real stuff."

"Don't you see," she exclaimed, "after the ship rescued the man who claimed to be president of the Tokyo company, he decided to continue as Lord Erskin long enough to unearth the game. He discovered the outlaws' hiding place, and with Ito's assistance quietly substituted sand for the stolen gold."

She turned toward the doubters appealingly, but still Saunders and the detectives hesitated.

"Oh, cut out the formality," interrupted the deposed president. "The jig's up, and I know it. My real name is Stanislaws Erickson. Larsen, poor chap, is known in other parts as Julius Neff. As a matter of fact," he asserted, "you've no case against me. You can't convict a man for running away with a carload of river sand."

"A very good point," acceded the ex-captive pleasantly. "May your sentence be light, as far as I am concerned."

Eckerson turned, and, no one making any objection, stumped his way up the stairs. Dugan clucked significantly with his tongue and ascended after him, followed by Murphy and Springler.

"Well," admitted Saunders, sheepishly, "it looks as if you'd put one over on me—Colonel Morningside." He turned to Marion. "Do you know, Miss Dupont, yours is the only part that hasn't been cleared up. I'm afraid," he suggested with a serious face, "we'll have to hold you as an accomplice unless you explain your presence last night on a load of highgrade headed for Denver."

For an instant she thought he actually meant it. Then she caught the lurking spirit of mischief in his eyes.

"Oh," she explained airily, "I was motoring for pleasure. You see—during our little trip in your interests, I promised Lord—Colonel Morningside—to marry him."

"I knew it!" countered the superintendent exuberantly, seizing each by the hand.

"So we did nab the fellow who was getting away with the real highgrade. She'll assay pure gold, old man, and I want to congratulate you on winning the nerviest girl I ever knew."

Then as Marion smiled up into the face of her lover, Saunders turned and bounded up the stairs, just in time to contrive a collision with Aunt Lucia, who was on her way down to breakfast when the tableaux burst upon her vision.

Without pausing for his apology, that lady hastened down the remaining steps.

"Have I heard aright!" she demanded melodramatically. "Engaged!—to Lord Erskin! Marion, my child, you have made me the happiest aunt in the world." She hurled herself weeping into her niece's arms.

"Oh, aunt! What a terrible disappointment there is in store for you," exclaimed Marion, with a look of dismay at William Morningside. "He's just plain American."

The End.

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Foot Remedy Co., 3661 Ogden Ave., Dept. 69 Chicago, Ill

WANTED—30,000 BOYS

WE HAVE 30,000 boys who sell our great papers, The Saturday Blade, Chicago Ledger and Lone Scout. Thousands of them earn from $1.00 to $5.00 a week. People in every town and R. F. D. know our great papers and we have received thousands of letters from people asking the name of the local agent so they could buy the papers from them. We want 30,000 more agents, so that there will be an agent in every town and R. F. D. route, and to get them we have a wonderful new plan which gives our agents cash profits on every paper they sell and

VALUABLE PREMIUMS AND FREE APPOINTMENT TO THE LONE SCOUTS OF AMERICA

No experience is necessary, the less experience you have the better. We show you when you start just where to get the customers, how to sell the papers and just what to do. No town or R. F. D. route is too small to sell our papers in. Thousands of our agents in the smallest towns and R. F. D. routes are making the biggest money every week and are getting the valuable premiums. Remember, you can't lose anything. We send the papers all in one bundle so that they come to you all at one time on Friday. You have a paper to sell to every man, woman and boy. We show you just how to build up a route of regular customers that means steady profits every week.

IT IS EASY TO GET STARTED TODAY

but you must hurry, for the agencies are being grabbed up quickly by boys. It takes no money to start. There is no expense or risk to you at any time. All we ask is that you do as we say. Will you? Just fill out the blank below and we will send you a complete agent's outfit absolutely free and your first week's supply of papers.

W. D BOYCE CO., DEPT. 3, 512 N. DEARBORN ST., CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

Name.....

Street or R. F. D. No.....

Town.....State.....

I accept the agency for your 3 papers. Send me as many copies of each as you think I can sell the first week. I will be pleased to receive my Certificate of Membership in the Lone Scouts and badge and booklet of instructions from Chief Totem FREE. Also tell me how to get the valuable premiums.

AUTO PRIZE CONTEST

MEN, WOMEN, BOYS AND GIRLS

You can win an automobile in addition to splendid prizes such as watches, cameras, and other things you like. Write us today, sending your answer with the faces marked, with 4c in stamps to help pay the postage and mailing expenses of the present which you have won. It will be mailed to you with your Certificate of Entry and 2,000 free votes in our Auto Contest. We will also send you a copy of two different popular publications worth 5c an issue. Write your name and address plainly so there will be no mistake.

This picture shows one of our friends driving an automobile like the one we are going to give away. In this picture there are six partly hidden faces which it will be lots of fun for you to find. It is not so easy to find the faces in this picture, but by close search and by twisting and turning the picture around, they will be revealed to you. Can you find them?

YOU WILL WIN A PRIZE

If you do; try it, don't give up. It will pay you. When you have found four of the faces, mark each with a cross (X), cut out the picture and mail it to us. When your answer is received we will send you a prize which we know you will appreciate, and it will be a big **surprise** to you. We will also make you a present of **2,000 free Auto votes,** and tell you all about this splendid automobile, touring car or roadster, which we are going to give away. We will give away many other prizes for just a little effort.

Auto Puzzle Dept. B, W. D. Boyce Co., 500 N. Dearborn St., Chicago, Ill.

THE EXPO

WATCH CAMERA

The most wonderful and ingenious Camera made

It is but little larger than a watch, which it closely resembles. You can carry the **Expo** about in your pocket and take pictures without any one being the wiser.

One Cent a Picture

The Expo loads in daylight with 25 Exposure Films, costing 25c, thus the picture taking part of a whole day's outing may be had for the nominal sum of 25c—One cent a picture. 10 Exposure Films also obtainable. It is simplicity itself to operate. Takes pictures through the stem, where the **Rapid Fire Lens** is located. The photos (5/8 x 7/8) may be enlarged to any size.

Price **$2.50**

QUICK AS A FLASH

Time and instantaneous shutters; weighs but 8 ounces; nickel plated. Endorsed by amateurs and professionals the world over. Thoroughly practical—printing and developing of films just the same as ordinary cameras—in daily use by the police, newspaper reporters, detectives, and the general public. Important bank secrets have been secured with the Watch Camera by enterprising reporters. Produces clear, sharp negatives indoors or outdoors equal to any camera on the market, size or price notwithstanding.

Expo Watch Camera Postage 10c Anywhere **$2.50** FILMS, 10 Exposures 15c, 25 Exposures, 25c. Leather Pocket Carrying Case, 35c.

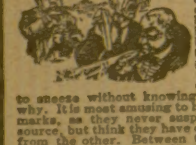
Johnson Smith & Co., Dept. B 6, 3224 N. Halsted St., Chicago

"The Baby" Double Action Hammerless Revolver

A Handsome and Most Effective Weapon. Measures But 4½ Inches Long. Takes Regular .22 Caliber Cartridges **$5.50**

The new **Baby Double Action Hammerless Revolver** has been produced to meet the ever increasing demand for a revolver that would combine small size and light weight with the essential features of **Efficiency and Practicability.** It is small in size, yet is just as effective and serviceable as the most expensive weapon you can buy. Everyone should have a revolver and should know how to use it, and there is no safer or better one made than this. A great feature is its safety action that guards against accidental discharge, making it quite safe for young men and ladies. The illustration gives an idea of its appearance, but it must be seen and used to be thoroughly appreciated. The ammunition used is the standard 22-calibre cartridge obtainable anywhere. The operation of the charging mechanism is extremely rapid and absolutely reliable; six well aimed shots can be fired in as many seconds. The revolver is very well constructed, with finest nickel plated fluted barrel of cylinder, and it weighs only 4½ ounces. The price of the Baby Revolver is only $5.50, sent by mail, p.pd. to any address.

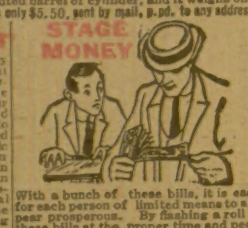
Sneezing Powder



Place a very small amount of this powder on the back of your hand and blow it into the air, and everyone in the room or car will begin to sneeze without knowing the reason why. It is most amusing to hear their remarks, as they never suspect the real source, but think they have caught it one from the other. Between the laughing and sneezing you yourself will be having the time of your life. Shipped only by express with a dollar's worth of other merchandise. Price 12c or 3 for 30c.

JOHNSON SMITH & CO.
Dept. B 6, 3224 N. Halsted St., Chicago

STAGE MONEY



With a bunch of these bills, it is easy for each person of limited means to appear prosperous. By flashing a roll of these bills at the proper time and peeling off a genuine bill or two from the outside of the roll, the effect created will be found to be all that can be desired. **Prices, postpaid: 15 Bills 10c, 50 Bills 25c, 125 for 50c, or $3.50 thousand.**

GREATEST TOY SENSATION OF THE DAY!

FIGHTING DREADNAUGHT

SENSATIONALLY REALISTIC!!!

Here is a model of Uncle Sam's fighting monsters. Eight big guns, each of which flashes, at correct intervals, from twelve to twenty times. Extra ammunition always obtainable. Absolutely harmless. Can be operated indoors or out. Now, boys! Here's your chance to see a battleship in action, and the best of it is you can OWN the ship and command the firing yourself! By having two or more Battleships, you can arrange EXCITING NAVAL BATTLES in your own home. **Price of Warship and Ammunition, 15c, three for 40c, or a fleet of 12 ships for $1.50 postpaid. Extra Ammunition, 5 cents per pkg.**

SQUIRT RING

You may have a lot of fun with this Sparkling Gem Squirt Ring. It consists of a handsome, plated ring, attached to a rubber ball, so arranged that the latter is quite out of view when the ring is in the proper position. Such an attractive looking ring as this cannot fail to be the center of attraction. While the victim is absorbed in getting a closer view, you just squeeze the rubber ball and the observer experiences a very great surprise. **PRICE 20 CENTS,** three for **50 cts, postpaid. J. S. & Co.**

Wonderful X-Ray Tube

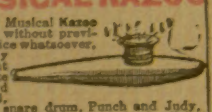
A wonderful little instrument producing optical illusions both surprising and startling. With it you can see what is apparently the bones of your fingers, the lead in a lead pencil, the interior opening in a pipe stem, and many other similar illusions. A mystery that no one has been able to satisfactorily explain!

Price 10 cents; 3 for 25 cents; 1 dozen, 75 cents. Sent by mail, postpaid.

LUMINOUS PAINT

Make Your Watches, Clocks, Etc., Visible by Night The very latest discovery in the scientific world. Hitherto, practically unobtainable except at an exorbitant price, we have at last succeeded in producing this remarkable LUMINOUS PAINT, which, applied to the surface of any article, emits rays of white light, rendering it perfectly visible in the dark. **THE DARKER THE NIGHT, THE MORE BRILLIANT IT SHINES.** Quite simple to use. Anyone—you can do it. A little applied to the dial of your watch or clock will enable you to tell the time by night. You can coat the push buttons or switch plates of your electric lights, match boxes, and innumerable other articles; make your own Luminous Crucifixes, Luminous Rosaries, etc. Bottle containing sufficient to coat several small articles, **Price 25c. Larger sizes 50c and $1 postpaid** Johnson Smith & Co., Chicago

MUSICAL KAZOO



With the Musical Kazoo you can, without practice whatsoever, play any tune right off, imitate any bird or animal, bagpipe, snare drum, Punch and Judy, etc. No holes to finger. It is simplicity itself. Produces excellent music. You do not blow into it, but sing, speak, laugh or make any desired imitation. Used with astonishing results at society meetings, home, club or church entertainments, dances, serenades, picnics, outings, excursions. Just the thing for choruses and shows, bicycle and marching clubs, etc. Excellent for vocal or instrumental accompaniments, either with or without other musical instruments. **Price 15c, p. pd.**

MAGIC FLUTE

Wonderfully Sweet Toned and Musical

Post Paid **15c**

A marvelous musical instrument. No other instrument produces sweeter music, whether it be the joyous notes of a quick-step or the solemn strains of a church hymn—in fact, any class of music can be played on this instrument without practice, as it is almost a self-playing instrument. When played with a piano accompaniment, or any other musical instrument, the effect is charming. Full printed instructions for playing sent with each instrument.

New Vamping Card

No Teacher Needed Surprisingly Simple System

Persons having neglected their Musical Education need not despair, for with the aid of our new VAMPING CARD (placing the card upright over the piano keys), you can at once Vamp away to thousands of Songs, Ballads, Waltzes, Rag Time, etc., etc., equal to a Professional Musician. No knowledge of music is required. After using it a few times, you will be able to dispense with the aid of the Vamping Card entirely. **Only 15 cts. p. pd.**

Johnson Smith & Co.

All the Latest Surprising and Joke Novelties

Pharo's Serpents Eggs, box	10c	Cover the Spot Trick, a scien. nov.	10c
Miniature Water Pistol	10c	X Ray Novelty	10c
Cleopatra's Snake (very lifelike)	15c	Trick Pencil	10c
False Mustache (fool your friends)	15c	Rubber Tacks (a good joke)	10c
Ford Auto Puzzle (Latest)	15c	Mesmerized Penny (defies the law of gravitation)	20c
Mysterious Ghost, shines at night	10c	Mysterious Tumbler and Vanishing Coin Trick	25c
Rubber Razor (very formidable)	20c	Magic Mirror (take one peep)	10c
Rubber Dagger (sensational)	25c	Magic Plate Lifter	15c
Window Smasher (great joke)	25c	Imitation Gold Teeth, 8 for 25c	10c
Looking-back-scope (see behind you)	15c	Great Purging Puzzle	10c
Great Mind Reading Mystery Cds.	10c	Wire Puzzles, 10c. 22 different, $1.96	
Thurston's Mysterious Trick Cds.	10c		
Fighting Roosters, pair	10c		

Johnson Smith & Co., Dept. B 6, 3224 N. Halsted St., Chicago

BOYS, YOU CAN HAVE MOVIES AT YOUR OWN HOME WITH THIS LATEST MODEL

MOVING PICTURE MACHINE

Uses Standard Films same as the larger machines. Very easily managed. Simply turn the handle.

Good Variety of Films always obtainable. **PRICE Complete ONLY $2.50** **Postpaid anywhere. Including Two Films. Extra Films, 15c each postpaid.**

THIS IS A GENUINE MOVING PICTURE MACHINE and the motion pictures are clear, sharp and distinct. The Moving Picture Machine is finely constructed, and carefully put together by skilled workmen. It is made of Russian Metal, has a beautiful finish, and is operated by a finely constructed mechanism. The projecting lenses are carefully ground and adjusted, triple polished, standard double extra reflector, throwing a ray of light many feet, and enlarging the picture on the screen up to three or four feet in area. The light is produced by a safety carbide generator, such as is used on the largest automobiles. This throws a dazzling white light on the screen.

It is a solidly constructed and durable Moving Picture Machine. The mechanism is exceedingly simple and is readily operated by the most inexperienced. The pictures shown by this marvelous Moving Picture Machine are not the common, crude and lifeless Magic Lantern variety, but are life-like photographic reproductions of actual scenes, places, and people which never tire its audiences. This Moving Picture Machine has caused a rousing enthusiasm wherever it was used.

JOHNSON SMITH & CO., Dept. B 6, 3224 North Halsted Street, CHICAGO

ANARCHIST BOMBS

Consists of a little glass vial, containing in liquid form a chemical which will produce a most horrible odor. One dropped in a room full of people will cause more consternation than a limburger cheese. The smell will entirely disappear in a short time. 3 Boxes for 25c, shipped by express only with a Dollar's worth of other merchandise.

ITCHING POWDER

This is another good practical joke; the intense discomfiture of your victims to everyone but themselves is thoroughly enjoyable. All that is necessary to start the ball rolling is to deposit a little of the powder on a person's hand and the powder can be relied upon to do the rest. The result is a vigorous scratch, then some more scratch, and still some more. 3 Boxes for 25c. Sent only by express. (Must order at least One Dollar's worth of other merchandise.)

INVISIBLE INK

The most confidential messages can be written with this ink, for the writing **MAKES NO MARK.** Cannot be seen unless you know the secret. Invaluable for many reasons. Keep your postals and other private memorandums away from prying eyes. Great fun for playing practical jokes. **Only 15c Bottle**

VANISHING INK

Writing written with this remarkable ink vanishes entirely in a few weeks (sooner if desired), leaving the paper QUITE BLANK. **15c p. pd.**

LUMINOUS INK

Writing can be READ ONLY IN A DARK ROOM; writing **shines like fire.** Quite invisible at daytime. Very remarkable. **15c bottle; 3 for 40c postpaid.** JOHNSON SMITH & CO.

GOOD LUCK RING

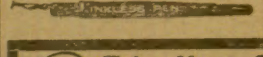
Quaint and Novel Design

A VERY striking and uncommon ring, made of gunmetal. Skull and crossbone design, with two brilliant flashing gems sparkling out of the eyes. A never failing object of interest. It is said by many to bring Good Luck to the wearer; hence its name **Good Luck Ring,** and whilst we will not positively guarantee that, it is certainly a very unique ring that you will take a pride in wearing. They were made to sell at 50 cents, but as a special bargain we will supply them to customers mentioning this paper, at **HALF PRICE, viz., ONLY 25 CENTS, POSTPAID.** JOHNSON SMITH & CO.

Newest Novelty Aerial Balloon

Flies gracefully in or outdoors. This is the VERY LATEST SENSATION IN BALLOONS. A brightly colored balloon that measures sixteen inches long is blown up the usual way, and, when released, the air pressure sends the balloon SOARING UPWARD, the 3 1-2 inch propeller SPINNING AROUND AT A LIVELY RATE. The effect is startling. It is a graceful flier that makes the youngsters WILD WITH JOY. May be used repeatedly indoors or outdoors. An immensely interesting toy. **Price 10c each, 3 for 25c, postpaid.** Johnson Smith & Co., Chicago.

INKLESS PEN



WRITES WITH WATER 600 words every time you dip. Makes its own ink. Writes a long letter with one dip in plain water. No trouble—no bother—no muss. A pleasure to use. With Nickel Plated Reversible Holder **10 CENTS,** 3 for 25c.

Trim Your Own Hair With the Utility Safety Hair Cutter

Agents Wanted

Cuts the Hair Any Length, Short or Long—Saves Its Cost First Time Used.

Price Only 35c **Extra Blades 5c Each**

If you can COMB your hair you can TRIM your own hair with this marvelous invention. The UTILITY TRIMMER will cut hair any length you desire, short or long, finish the job as nicely as any barber and in one-fourth the time before your own mirror. The ladies can cut the children's hair at home in a jiffy; can be used as an ordinary razor to shave the face or finish around the temples and neck. Sharpened like any razor; can be carried in the vest pocket ready for instant use and will last a lifetime. To use it, stand in front of a mirror, if necessary, and use the UTILITY TRIMMER like you would a comb. Push it through the hair, downward, in the direction the hair lies, **but Never Upward.** To cut long hair, first moisten the hair and comb it, so it will lie close to the head, then start cutting with downward cuts as high as you desire, evenly all around the head. Finish around the neck and temples with a square cut, like a barber. It is impossible to leave any "nicks" or "cat steps" in your hair with this device, as the handle guard guides the cutter blade evenly over the scalp. To cut very close, push the blade until the cutting edge is even with the guard teeth. To shave the face or neck it can be used as an ordinary razor by reversing the blade in the holder, the cutting edge being to the back of the holder, exposing the entire blade, except each corner. To hone, place the blade in the holder with the cutting edge to the back, opening until the cutting edge is clear of the back of the holder. Then hone in the usual manner; finish on a strop as with an ordinary razor. Johnson Smith & Co., Dept. B 6, 3224 N. Halsted St., Chicago

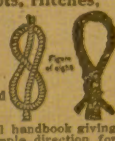
THE "LITTLE GIANT" TYPEWRITER

A First Class Writing Machine For $1.25

A perfect little typewriter for $1.25. There are thousands of persons who would like to use a typewriter but whose needs and business do not warrant the expense attached to the purchase and use of a fifty or seventy-five dollar machine. To such persons we confidently recommend our Little Giant. It is strongly made, but simple in construction, so that any one can quickly learn to operate it, and write as rapidly as they would with pen and ink. The letters of the alphabet most frequently used being so grouped as to enable one to write rapidly, the numerals, 1 to 10, and the punctuation marks being together. With this machine you can send your best girl typewritten love letters, address envelopes, make out bills, and do almost any kind of work not requiring a large expensive machine. With each typewriter we send a tube of ink and full printed instructions for using the machine. Price complete **$1.25** by mail postpaid.

NEW BOOK ON ROPE SPLICING

Useful Knots, Hitches, Splices, etc.



How Different Knots Are Made and What They Are Used For. Knots to Use and Knots to Avoid.

A most practical handbook giving complete and simple direction for making all the most useful knots, hitches, rigging, splices, etc. Over 100 Illustrations. All about wire rope attachments, lashing, blocks, tackles, etc. 87 Heraldic Knots illustrated. Of great value to mechanics, riggers, campers, boatmen. **Price 20c postpaid.**

JOHNSON SMITH & CO., Dept. B6 3224 N. Halsted, Chicago

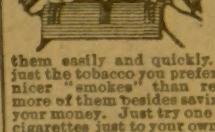
SERPENT'S EGGS

Each box contains 12 Eggs, which are no larger than a grain of oats. When lit with a match, however, each one gradually hatches itself into a Snake several feet long, which curls and twists about in a most lifelike manner. **Price per box 10c, postpaid.** Johnson Smith & Co.

MYSTIC SKELETON

A jointed figure of a skeleton 14 inches in height, will dance to music and perform various gymnastic movements while the operator may be any distance from it. The figure may be examined by the spectators. When handed back the operator it is simply placed on a chair or table, when it will seemingly become endowed with life, and begin to move. At the command of the operator it will go down, stand up, dance, etc. We send full directions with each Skeleton, by the aid of which anyone can readily make it perform. **10c postpaid.**

CIGARETTE ROLLER

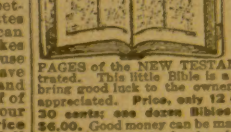


Very neat and handy. Weighs less than a quarter of an ounce. It makes better cigarettes than you can buy and makes them easily and quickly. You can use just the tobacco you prefer and thus have nicer "smokes" than ready-made, and more of them besides saving about half of your money. Just try one and make your cigarettes just to your own liking. **Price only 10c or 3 for 25c postpaid,** with full instructions for use. JOHNSON SMITH & CO.

MIDGET ILLUSTRATED BIBLE

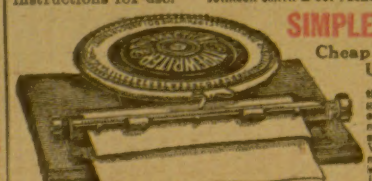
A Great Curiosity

The Smallest Bible in the World



The Midget Bible is a perfect gem, and a work of art. It is about the size of a postage stamp and contains TWO HUNDRED AND FIFTY PAGES of the NEW TESTAMENT, profusely illustrated. This little Bible is a wonder. It is said to bring good luck to the owner. Must be seen to be appreciated. **Price, only 12 cents, three Bibles for 30 cents; one dozen Bibles for $1.00 or 100 for $6.00.** Good money can be made selling these Midget Bibles amongst friends, church acquaintances, Sunday schools, bazaars, etc. Send for a few and try it.

SIMPLEX TYPEWRITER ONLY $2.50



Cheap But Good. So Simple a Child Can Use It. We Guarantee the Writing. Though so **marvelously cheap,** this machine is a **thoroughly practical Typewriter.** We positively guarantee it to produce writing **equal in every respect to that of any $100 machine.** It does not seem possible at the price, but **let us send you a specimen of its work** and you will be convinced. With reasonable care it **will last a lifetime.** It is so simple that **a child just able to read can write with it.** You can learn all there is to know about it in **five minutes,** and an hour's practice will make you an **expert operator.** Every business man must have a typewriter. Illegible **pen writing is unbusinesslike** and creates the impression that the firm is a no-account and slow-going concern. We assure you that the **Practical Typewriter** fully deserves its name, as the marks are so grouped that the letters most used are before the operator most of the time, enabling him to write rapidly. The rollers hold the paper in position while writing and at the end of each line a slight turn of the roller moves the ratchet which makes a click and forces the paper forward, giving the proper line spacing, so that the lines are all an equal distance from each other, so desirable in letter writing. Each typewriter packed in a strong box, with full printed instructions for use. Price complete, $2.50 sent by mail postpaid. Johnson Smith & Co., Dept. B6, 3224 N. Halsted St., Chicago

JAPANESE ROSE BUSHES

The Wonder of the World

10 Cts.

Japanese Rose Bushes **bloom all the year round.** Just think of it. Six weeks after planting the seed, the plants will be in **full bloom.** It may not seem possible, but we positively **guarantee it to be so.** They will **bloom every ten weeks,** Summer or Winter, and when three years old the bush will be a **mass of roses,** bearing from five hundred to a thousand roses on each bush. The flowers are in three shades—white, pink, and crimson. The plants will do well both in and out doors. We guarantee at least three bushes to grow from each packet of seed. **Price, 10c** packet, 3 pkts. for **25c** postpaid.

Chinese Fragrant Tree Fern

Just introduced; noted for its rapid growth. An exceptionally pretty ornamental plant. Foliage is rich dark green. Forms grand pyramidal bushes about 8 feet high. Branches very desirable for decorative purposes, wreaths, etc. **Seeds 15c pkt., 3 for 40c.**

Weather Plant

NATURE'S WEATHER PROPHET By mysterious changes that take place, this remarkable plant accurately forecasts the weather many hours in advance. Will grow anywhere all the year around. An interesting house plant. Bears large, fragrant, pink, butterfly shape flowers. **Seeds, 15c packet, 3 for 40c, postpaid**

GROUND ALMONDS

Amazingly Prolific—Easily Grown From Seed

The Ground Almond has a flavor that is MOST EXCELLENT, resembling the cocoanut. The meat is snow white, covered with a shell or skin of brown color. It grows close to the surface and anything from 200 to 300 Almonds may be expected from a single nut. There is no trouble whatever in growing anywhere and in any kind of soil. May be planted any time, and in eight or ten weeks from time of planting you will have an ENORMOUS CROP of the MOST DELICIOUS ALMONDS YOU EVER TASTED. **Seeds 15c Pkt.**

Johnson Smith & Co., Dept. B 6, 3224 N. Halsted St., Chicago

Perfume Plant

Blooms only at night, giving forth the most delightful scented fragrance for quite a distance. Causes much comment. For house or garden. Also valuable because of rare perfume made from it. **SEEDS, 10c pkt., 3 for 25c.**

SENSITIVE PLANT

Marvel of the Philippines. Leaves curl, fronds droop when touched. Apparently resents interference. A handsome shrub for house or garden; very curious and interesting. **Seeds, 15c pkt., 3 for 40c.**

Calabash or Pipe Gourds

A luxuriant and rapid growing climber that thrives anywhere. Produces the ornamental gourds from which the famous African calabash pipes are made. Grow this interesting vine and make your own. **Seeds, with instructions, 15c pkt., 3 for 40c.**

Japanese Nest Egg Gourd

Very curious. Produces fruit same size, shape and color of nest egg. Matured fruit does not crack. Will serve for years as a nest egg, stocking darner, ornamental purposes, etc. **Seeds 15c pkt., 3 pkts. for 40c.**

Mammoth Peanuts

Peanuts can be easily cultivated. Their culture is very simple and exceedingly interesting. Mammoth Peanuts grow to an astonishing size. It is a good producer, very prolific, and the **giant nuts** have a thick, heavily ribbed protecting shell. The plant is very attractive, the leaves being of odd shape and a handsome green shade, tinted through the center with white. You will derive much pleasure cultivating this interesting species. **Seeds 15c pkt., 3 pkts. for 40c.**

Johnson Smith & Co., Dept. Bf 3224 N. Halsted St., Chicago

Shoo Fly Plant

A very remarkable Botanical curiosity you should have. Though quite odorless, flies will not remain in a room where it is grown. Bears very pretty blossoms; blooms summer and winter. Grows rapidly from seed. **SEEDS 15c packet, 3 for 40c, postpaid.**

Japanese Climbing Cucumber

Unusually strong and vigorous growing vine. Attains twice the size of ordinary varieties. Grows readily on fences, poles, trellises, etc. One hill will keep an entire family supplied all summer. **Seeds 10c, 3 pkts. for 25c.**

Gigantic New Guinea Butter Beans

The New Edible Vegetable Wonder

Grows to an astonishing size, the Beans measuring from 3 to 6 feet long, and weighing anything from 10 to 16 lbs. and even more. One Bean is sufficient for a family for several meals. Very palatable and rich in nutritious materials. The delicate Buttery Flavor is much appreciated. The Vines are easily grown, very prolific, and a most welcome and valuable adjunct to your garden. Try them; you will find them the **most delicious vegetable you have ever tasted.** Imported direct. Unobtainable elsewhere. Sample package of Seeds with full directions for cultivating and cooking. **25c, postpaid.**

Johnson Smith & Co., Dept. B 6, 3224 N. Halsted St., Chicago

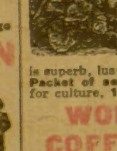
DEVIL'S CLAW

An ornamental plant, bearing beautiful flowers which are succeeded by large seed pods that, when young, are fine for pickling. They are delicious in soups, stews, etc., and make fine pickles. **Packet 10c, 3 packets for 25 cents.**

Butterfly's Own Bush

This plant is a veritable refuge of heaven for butterflies, and it attracts all the most beautiful types of butterflies to the neighborhood. Bees, too, are very fond of it. It is a pretty plant bearing perfectly double flowers, ranging from white to rich crimson, deep red and pink, lilac and other delicate shades. **Packet 10c, 3 for 25 cents.**

Bush Musk Melon



A vineless Musk Melon, grown in bushes, and thus can be cultivated in the smallest garden. The fruit is of the "Jenny Lind" type, but larger, averaging 5 inches in diameter. The flesh is very deep, edible almost to the rind and is colored light green, flushed with salmon toward the center. The quality is superb, lusciously sweet and juicy. **Packet of seeds,** with full directions for culture, **15c, 3 Packets for 40c**

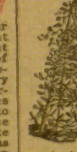
CROWN OF THORNS

A very curious and remarkable window plant, can be trained over any desired form. Bright scarlet flowers. An object of rare and striking beauty. It grows easily grown. It grows wild in Judea, and it is said that it was on this plant that the crown of thorns was made which was worn by our Saviour. **Packet, 10c, 3 Packets for 25 cents**

WONDERFUL COFFEE BERRY

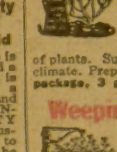
You can raise your own coffee for one cent a pound and help cut down the high cost of living. The New Domestic Coffee Berry makes a delicious, nourishing drink that gives health and strength to young and old. The best coffee substitute ever discovered. It has the rich, deep brown color of old Java. One of the hardiest, easiest grown, most productive of plants. Successfully grown in any climate. Prepared like any coffee. **10c package, 3 pkgs. for 25c, postpaid.**

THE TREMBLING VINE



A beautiful annual climber with lovely feathery foliage, that trembles in the breeze, showing masses of pretty star-shaped flowers of scarlet, pink and white. The effect is most charming, the tubular flowers contrasting effectively against the bright, delicate fern-like leaves. For training upon a light trellis the Trembling Vine cannot be excelled, for window decoration, or ornamental work of every description it is very pretty indeed. **Packet, 15 cents, 3 Packets for 40 cents, postpaid.** J. S. & Co.

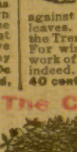
Weeping Lantana



A fine plant for small hanging baskets. Flowers are delicate rosy lilac, borne freely all over the plant from the base of each leaf stalk. **Packet, 10 cents, 3 for 25 cents.**

Johnson Smith & Co., Dept. B 6, 3224 North Halsted St., Chicago

The Great Wonderberry



A luscious berry that may be grown and ripened from seed in any soil or climate in three months. The flavor is fine and unsurpassed for eating raw, cooked, canned or preserved in any form. The fruit is blue-black in color, and tastes like a luscious, rich blueberry. One bush will produce an enormous amount of fruit, yielding great masses of rich fruit all Summer and Fall. **Packet, 10c, 3 Packets for 25 cents, postpaid.** J. S. & Co.

A Few Other Seed Novelties You Should Cultivate—10c Pkt.

Japanese Kudzu Vine (Jack and Beanstalk)	Japanese Hop Vine	Emerald Isle Kale
Chinese Balloon Flower	Castor Oil Plant	Famous Passion Flower Vine
Purple Feather Grass (Ornamental)	Ornamental Cotton	Fuchsias
Curious Ferns (grown from seed)	Job's Tears (Great curiosity)	Ornamental Gourds
Bird of Paradise Flower	Cathedral Bells	Bouquet, or Red Cluster Pepper
	Tiger Flower	Salsify, or Oyster Plant
	Snake Cucumber	White Velvet Okra

Nitto's Plant & Flower Food changes ill-nourished plants into Luxuriant **Beauties,** producing masses of blooms that will equal any. **Causes plants to bloom early and ahead of others.** Friends marvel at success. Brings out **New Foliage and Flowers,** and causes a **Marvelous Transformation. Pkge. 15c, 3 for 40c.**

JOHNSON SMITH & CO.,
Dept. B6, 3224 N. Halsted St., Chicago

Veracity.

"What is the defendant's reputation for veracity?" asked the judge.

"Your honor," said the witness, "I've known him to admit that he had been fishing all day and hadn't got a single bite."

Breaking the News.

"Father, was writing done on tablets of stone in the old days?"

"Yes, my son," replied the dutiful parent.

"Gee!" mused the boy. "Then it must have taken a crowbar to break the news."

Aftermath.

Photographer (to grouchy customer)—"There, sir, I congratulate myself on a success! I've caught you at your best—with that pleasant expression. But—I must tell you now, you've been sitting on your hat."—Judge.

Becoming Apprehensive.

"My husband has been missing for a week."

"Why didn't you report this sooner?"

"Well, for the first three or four days I didn't think much of it as I figured he was likely waiting for a street car."

Classified Want Ads

Information— The rate for one insertion in The Saturday Blade and one insertion in Chicago Ledger is 30 cents a word, minimum 14 words, less 3% for cash. Each initial and group of figures is counted as a word, and the name and address are also counted. This is the minimum rate; neither more nor less is charged, irrespective of size or number of insertions. An ad may appear in both publications of the same week, or in the Blade of one week and the Ledger of the next.

W. D. BOYCE CO., Publisher, 500-514 N. Dearborn St., Chicago.

AGENTS WANTED

AGENTS WANTED TO DISTRIBUTE OUR complete line of Ford accessories. Our line includes six accessories that will interest owners of Ford cars. This is the opportunity for you to develop a profitable business in a short time. We assign our agents exclusive territory and send them the inquiries from their territory. Our discount is liberal. Write today for complete information. The Jonny Brothers, Richmond, Va.

AGENTS: 2 IN 1 REVERSIBLE RAINCOAT. Two coats in one. One side a handsome black raincoat, reverse side fine dress coat. Something new. Not sold in stores. Steam vulcanized. Guaranteed water-proof. Big seller. All styles and sizes for men, women and children. Write for agency. Guaranteed Raincoat Co., 1511 North St., Dayton, Ohio.

"HISTORY OF THE WORLD WAR" BY Francis A. March, brother of General March. Authentic—complete—750 pages—illustrated—official photographs. Freight paid—credit given. Agents making fortunes. Free outfit. Victory Publishing Company, 653 Manhattan Bldg., Chicago.

AGENTS: REVERSIBLE RAINCOAT. SOME- thing new. One side dress garment, other rubber storm coat. Guaranteed waterproof. Latest style. Easy sales. Big commission. Sample furnished. Parker Mfg. Company, 309 Rue St., Dayton, Ohio.

AGENTS: NEW 2 IN 1 REVERSIBLE RAIN- coat. Saves $10. One side dress coat, other side storm coat. Guaranteed "waterproof or money back." Big commission. Credit given. Parker Mfg. Co., 109 Rue St., Dayton, Ohio.

SELL HISTORY OF GREAT WORLD WAR, also Life Theodore Roosevelt; both complete; official; $2 books; your profit half; make $5 an hour; both outfits free; send 10c postage for each. Globe Association, 320 Como Bldg., Chicago.

KENDALITE GAS MAKER MAKES ITS own gas from kerosene. Displaces coal and wood in stoves and heaters. Sells all the year. Agents make $5 to $15 a day. Kendalite Co. Inc., N. Y. City.

NEGRO IN WAR—NEW BOOK, COMPLETE, the only war book fair to colored people; millions will be sold. Big hit, big outfit 25c. Write quick. Jennings Publishing Co., Washington, D. C.

WE START YOU IN BUSINESS, FURNISH- ing everything; men and women, $30.00 to $100.00 weekly operating our "New System Specialty Candy Factories" anywhere. Opportunity lifetime; booklet free; Z. Ragsdale Co., East Orange, N. J.

AGENTS: SELL RICH-LOOKING IMPORTED 36x68 rugs, $1 each. Carter Tennant in four days; profit $57. You can do same. Write for sample offer selling plan; exclusive territory; sample rug by parcel post prepaid $1.19. Condon, Importer, Stonington, Maine.

AGENTS—ONE POUND OF OUR HERBS drives the most stubborn Rheumatism entirely out of system. Never fails. Pound 62c postpaid. Rheumatism Herb Co., 509 Laughlin Bldg., Los Angeles, Cal.

AGENTS: QUICK SELLER, BIG PROFITS. California rosebeads. New stuff. Tremendous demand. Coining money for hustlers. Catalog free. Mission Bead Co., 1462 Irola, Los Angeles, Cal.

OUR COMPLETE HISTORY OF THE WAR contains Gen. Pershing's own story and peace supplement. Best terms with premiums. Prompt shipments. Outfit free. Nichols Co., Dept. B, Naperville, Ill.

$1.85 FOR MEN'S MADE-TO-ORDER PANTS —worth $5.00. Sample free. Money-making offer for agents, part time or all. Write today. Chicago Tailors' Association, Dept. J-447, 515 So. Franklin St., Chicago.

AGENTS—A NEW ONE; HARPER'S FIBRE broom and ten-use brush set combined. Save broom expense; lightens housework; easy seller; first order returnable. Harper Brush Works, Dept. B, Fairfield, Iowa.

AGENTS: YOUR CREDIT IS GOOD FOR 10 packages Native Herbs. For constipation and family use. Sell at 10c each, keep 50c as your profit, remit 50c. Melrose Co., Dept. 241, Columbus, Ohio.

WE START YOU WITHOUT A DOLLAR— Soaps, extracts, perfumes, toilet goods. Experience unnecessary. Carnation Co., 26 S. Main. St. Louis.

WE PAY $36 A WEEK AND EXPENSES and give Ford auto to men to introduce poultry and stock compounds. Imperial Co., Dept. 31, Parsons, Kans.

AGENTS — I'VE A NEW SOAP GAME that's a dandy. New stuff; 100% profits. Sample and full layout free. Write quick. Lacassian Co., Dept. 21, St. Louis, Mo.

WE PAY $100 MONTHLY SALARY AND furnish rig and expenses to introduce guaranteed poultry and stock powders. Bigler Company, X520, Springfield, Illinois.

SELL YOUR OWN GOODS. 200% PROFIT. We put them up under your own name. Parker Co., Howe, Ind.

FEMALE HELP WANTED

WOMEN TO SEW. GOODS SENT PRE- paid to your door; plain sewing; steady work; no canvassing. Send stamped envelope for prices paid. Universal Co., Dept. 54, Philadelphia, Pa.

WANTED—6 BRIGHT, CAPABLE LADIES for 1919, to travel, demonstrate and sell dealers. $25.00 to $50.00 per week. Railroad fare paid. Write at once. Goodrich Drug Co., Dept. 85, Omaha, Neb.

WOMEN—BE EXPERT DRESS DESIGNERS. Earn $125 month. Sample lessons free. Write immediately. Franklin Institute, Dept. D854, Rochester, N. Y.

HELP WANTED

RAILWAY MAIL CLERKS GET $92-$135 month. Men-Women 18-35. Common education sufficient. Sample examination questions free. Write immediately. Franklin Institute, Dept. D 29, Rochester, N. Y.

NAMES & ADDRESSES WANTED. $12.50 per hundred paid. Attractive spare time work for men & women. Copyists also wanted. Enclose stamp for particulars. Bostion & Co., E. LeGore, Md.

EVERY READER OF THE LEDGER OUGHT to read these ads. Every week splendid chances to make money—to better yourself—to buy, sell or exchange goods or services, are offered here.

WANTED WOMEN, 18 OR OVER. PERMA- nent Government clerical jobs. $1,100 year. List free. Write immediately. Franklin Institute, Dept. D 27, Rochester, N. Y.

BUSINESS WORTHWHILE. I START YOU silvering mirrors, plating tableware; plans free. Clarence Sprinkle, Dept. 2, Marion, Ind.

MALE HELP WANTED

RAILWAY TRAFFIC INSPECTORS; $110.00 a month to start and expenses. Travel if desired. Unlimited advancement. No age limit. Three months home study. Situation arranged. Prepare for permanent position. Write for booklet CM12. Standard Business Training Institute, Buffalo, N. Y.

FIREMEN, BRAKEMEN, BAGGAGEMEN, $140-$200. Colored porters, by railroads everywhere. Experience unnecessary. 686 Railway Bureau, East St. Louis, Ills.

WANTED COLORED SALESMEN—MAR- velous new health, accident insurance. Big opportunity. Act quickly. Dept. 18, Box 351, Chicago.

MEN—AGE 17 TO 45. EXPERIENCE UN- necessary. Travel; make secret investigations, reports. Salaries; expenses. American-Foreign Detective [illegible]

MEN, BRAKEMEN, $150-$200 MONTH- ly, all railroads, everywhere, experience unnecessary. Railway Association, Brooklyn, N. Y.

BE A DETECTIVE. EXCELLENT OPPOR- tunity, good pay, travel. Write C. T. Ludwig, 320 Westover Bldg., Kansas City, Mo.

BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

$100.00 INVESTMENT IN NORTH TEXAS oil stock makes $100,000.00. You may share the profits of the world's greatest oil field in north Texas without risking the loss of one single cent by investing on the guarantee system of a successful and producing company with large wells who issue a production bond guaranteeing a return of $2.00 for $1.00 with a possible profit of from 1,000% to 10,000% profit. Write immediately for full details. Prudential Securities Company, 233 Scanlan Bldg., Houston, Texas.

SENSATIONAL OIL DISCOVERIES IN northwest Texas. Millions being made by large and small investors; $100 invested in Burkburnett made $20,000 in few months; thousands more investors growing rich; get facts free about this amazing situation and learn how to share in these enormous profits; Texas Investor, a weekly magazine of oil facts, sent free for trial subscription; write to-day. C. C. Cannon, publisher, 95 Petroleum Bldg., Ft. Worth, Texas.

OIL INVESTEMENTS IN WONDERFUL NEW fields of north Texas now making thousands of small investors wealthy. Biggest thing in the world today. $100 grew into $20,000 in six short months. Free facts sent showing how you may share in these amazing profits. Write today; thousands growing rich from small investments; why not you? Address. Gliot, 733 Kress Building, Houston, Texas.

OIL & GAS: WE HAVE JUST BROUGHT IN our third well. Are paying large cash dividends monthly. Our stock is $1.25 per share now and we offer a rare chance to those investors who want to make money fast and yet be safe. Write us for full particulars. Jackpot Oil Company, Sapulpa, Okla.

MONEY BACK IF YOU WANT IT, IS THE way we are placing limited amount of oil shares, $10 each, in company operating in famous Iowa Park Oil Fields of Texas. Only a few shares at this offer. Act quick. Address Big Money Oil Company, 612 Seventh street, Wichita Falls, Texas.

$2.00 A MONTH PAYS FOR DEED TO land and share in oil wells that should earn $100 for each $2.00 invested. Write postal card for particulars. Texas Gulf Co., 633 First Nat. Bank, Houston, Texas.

BRAND NEW IDEA IN AUTOMOBILE service stations. Anyone can start anywhere. Excellent proposition. Write Wittwer, Box 84, Greatfalls, Montana.

SILVER MINES MAKING MILLIONAIRES through small investments. Address, Midwest Investment Bureau, Boston Block, Minneapolis, Minn.

TOBACCO HABIT

TOBACCO OR SNUFF HABIT CURED OR no pay. $1.00 if cured. Remedy sent on trial. Superba Co., TC, Baltimore, Md.

WISCONSIN FARM LANDS

LANDOLOGY, A MAGAZINE GIVING THE facts in regard to the land situation. Three months' subscription, free. If for a home or as an investment you are thinking of buying good farm lands, simply write me a letter and say, "Mail me Landology and all particulars free." Address Editor, Landology, Skidmore Land Co., 26 Skidmore Bldg., Marinette, Wis.

MOVING PICTURE BUSINESS

LARGE PROFITS DAILY MADE IN THIS business. Openings everywhere. Small capital starts you. Complete outfits sold on installments. No experience needed. Our machines are used and endorsed by Government institutions. Catalog free. Atlas Moving Picture Company, Morton Building, Chicago.

SHORT STORIES WANTED

WANTED—STORIES, ARTICLES, POEMS for new magazine. We pay on acceptance. Handwritten mss. acceptable. Send mss. to Womans' National Magazine, 624, Washington, D. C.

WRITERS! — STORIES, POEMS, PLAYS, etc., are wanted for publication. Literary Bureau, B4, Hannibal, Mo.

TOBACCO

BURLEY SMOKING AND CHEWING TO- bacco from factory to consumer, 42 cents per 12 oz. pkg., in lots of five pkgs. or more, postpaid. Send stamp for postage on free sample. (If you are more than 18 years of age). Carl H. Moeller, R-1, Green Bay, Wis.

SONG POEM WANTED

YOU WRITE THE WO[illegible] FOR A SONG— Submit poems on patriotism, love, or any subject. We write music, guarantee copyright and assist in securing publisher. Metropolitan Studios [illegible]

WRITE A SONG—LOVE, MOTHER, HOME, childhood, patriotic or any subject. I compose music and guarantee publication. Send words today. Thomas Merlin, 219 Reaper Block, Chicago.

TRICKS—GAMES

MAGIC GOODS, DICE, CARDS, GAMES, books, tricks. Catalogue free. National Supply Co., Box 116, Hurdland, Mo.

MAGIC GOODS, BOOKS, CARDS, LODE- stone, dice, tricks. Catalog free. B. L. Smith Co., Newark, Mo.

BOOKS

CLASSIC STORIES, NEW POCKET EDITION bound in keratol leather 25c each, 5 all different $1.00. Entire library, 20 volumes prepaid, $3.00. National Sales Co., Phoenix Bldg., Baltimore, Maryland.

HAIR CUTTER

CUT YOUR OWN HAIR EASILY AND COR- rectly with the new Ucan. Write for free catalogue. Great Eastern Mail Order House, Box 2085, Phila, Pa.

MOTORCYCLES

MOTORCYCLES $25 UP, TERMS, SEND 4 cents stamps, bulletin "R." Peerless Motorcycle Co., Watertown, Mass.

VAUDEVILLE

STAGE CAREER OFFERED YOU. EXPERI- ence unnecessary. Send stamp for instructive booklet "All About Vaudeville." LaDelle, Sta. 40, Jackson, Mich.

MEDICAL

TO SUFFERING MEN AND WOMEN. IF you have lame back, failing memory, loss of ambition, despondency, unfitting you for the ordinary duties of life; or if afflicted with any chronic nervous, blood, kidney or bladder disease. Remember; we are specialists in these diseases. Write; book symptom blank and advice free, sealed. Dr. Meyers, 314 Nicollet Ave., Minneapolis, Minn.

GOITRE CURED AT HOME; WORST CASES. No pain. No cost if it fails. Successfully used for 13 years. Write for free book and testimonials. Goitrene Co., 578 West 63rd St., Chicago.

PATENTS

INVENTORS—SEND SKETCH AND DES- cription of your invention for advice regarding patent protection. Twenty years' experience. Our hand-book on patents is sent free on request. All communications strictly confidential. Write us today. Talbert & Talbert, Patent Lawyers, 4376 Talbert Bldg., Washington, D. C.

PATENTS PROMPTLY PRODUCED. SEND drawings for actual search of U. S. patents. Personal service. Moderate fees. Write for free patent book. George P. Kimmel, Patent Lawyer, 20-R Loan & Trust Bldg., Washington, D. C.

FOR BOYS AND GIRLS

GUARANTEED WATCH OR GOLD PLATED bracelet free to boys and girls for placing sample packet seeds with friends. Eckert Seed Co., B-21, Cly, Pa.

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MUSIC—JOIN OUR MUSIC CLUB. WE WILL send two copies of the latest Broadway Hits each month, also monthly list of latest song hits. Write today for free particulars. New York Song Shop, 1545M Broadway, N. Y.

PERSONAL

MEN WHO ARE LOSING OUT IN LIFE through lost vigor can find a marvelous remedy and complete restoration in 808 Tablets—the wonderful 48-hour medicine. Different from anything ever heard of. Holds world's record. $1 per box. Particulars and wonderful testimonials free. 808 Chemical Co., Dept. G, Pittsburg, Kansas.

SUFFERERS FROM NERVOUS, WEAK run down conditions should take Juven Pills. They accomplish marvelous results. This medicine has more rejuvenating, vitalizing force than has ever before been offered. Sent postpaid only on receipt of this advertisement and $1, by C. I. Hood Co., proprietors Hood's Sarsaparilla, Lowell, Mass. (Z.R.)

MEN—SEXTONIQUE NEVER FAILS TO restore strength to those troubled with nervous, weak, run-down and despondent conditions that undermine good health. Costs nothing if not cured. Write for free book. Cumberland Chemical Co., 32 Berry Block, Nashville, Tenn.

MEN ON THE DOWN GRADE, REMEMBER we cure varicocele, stricture, chronic, nervous, blood, kidney, bladder and private diseases. Book symptom blank and advice free, sealed. Hinze Medical Institute, 22 Washington Ave. So., Minneapolis, Minn.

MARRY AT ONCE, WE PUT YOU IN COR- respondence with thousands of charming and refined ladies who wish to marry, many worth from $1,000 to $25,000 and upwards. Particulars free. Address Allen Ward, B 529, Valley, Nebr.

MARRY. THOUSANDS CONGENIAL PEO- ple, worth from $1,000 to $50,000 seeking early marriage; descriptions, photos, introductions free. Sealed. Either sex. Send no money. Address Standard Cor. Club, Grayslake, Ill.

MARRY—WITHIN SIXTY DAYS. Nothing ever like it in America. Pilot Pub. Co., Desk 10, Marshall, Mich.

THOUSANDS ANXIOUS TO MARRY. worth $1,000 to $800,000. Confidential descriptions free in plain sealed envelope. Satisfaction guaranteed. Peoples Club, Box 4, San Diego, California.

A LETTER TO DR. ROWE, THE SPECIAL- ist, brings his serial No. 1 on varicocele, stricture & urinary diseases; every man should have it. Postage 4c. Send to day. Dr. Rowe, 112 North Pearl St., Buffalo, N. Y.

SIXTH AND SEVENTH BOOKS OF MOSES, Egyptian secrets, black art, other rare books. Catalogue free. Star Book Co., T-5, Camden, N. J.

MARRY—FREE PHOTOS, BEAUTIFUL ladies; descriptions and directory; pay when married. New Plan Co., Dept. 31, Kansas City, Mo.

MARRY—MARRIAGE DIRECTORY WITH photos and descriptions free. Pay when married. The Exchange, Dept. 28, Kansas City, Mo.

CATHOLICS WISHING TO MARRY, WANT- ing introductions. Booklet free. Catholic Correspondence Club. S. D., Grand Rapids, Mich.

GET MARRIED—JOIN MY CORRESPOND- ence club. Many rich members. Information free. Write today. F. Glenn, Rivergrove, Ill.

MAGIC WORDS! AMAZING, SURE METHOD of obtaining your desires. Postpaid for dime. Lida Smedley, 141 Miller, Brooklyn, N. Y.

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25 FINE DEN PICTURES, POSTCARDS and big bargain offer 25c. Higbey Co., Frankfort, Ind.

ART PHOTOS FROM LIFE. SAMPLE "Beauty Pose" and catalogue 10c. Simpson Co., Wheeling, W. Va.

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PHOTOS! BATHING PEACHES FROM THE Beaches. Sent sealed, 25c. H. Sarvis, Barnes City, Iowa.

BATHING GIRLS, ART POSES, GREEK slave 10c, refunded if dissatisfied. Roseleaf Club, St. Louis, Mo.

GET MARRIED—BEST MATRIMONIAL PA- per published. Free for stamp. Correspondent, Toledo, Ohio.

MARRIAGE PAPER FREE; BEST PUBLI- cation for sure results; reliable. Eastern Agency, 65, Bridgeport, Connecticut.

PILE TUMOR MEDICINE, FREE SAMPLE. F. Pollard, 402½ E 5, Los Angeles.

Bargain in Parlor Rocker

Sent For Only $1 Down

Try this rocker for 30 days and see what a bargain it is. Frame is selected kiln dried hardwood, exposed parts solid oak in rich golden finish. 4 springs in seat supported on steel bands. Upholstered in imitation Spanish brown leather. Richly carved side wings and 2-panel back. Hcight, back from floor 37 in.—back from seat 24 in. Width over all 27 in. A fine roomy rocker. Shipping weight about 35 lbs. Shipped from Chicago warehouse or factory in Western New York State. Order by No. 99AMA6. Price $6.99. Send only $1.00 now. Balance 75c monthly.

Complete 7-Piece Set

SENT For ONLY $1.00 Down

World's Greatest Furniture Offer. Artistically made 7-piece Mission set of seasoned solid oak—rich brown mission finish—smoothly waxed. 2 large rockers, 1 with arms; 2 large chairs, 1 with arms; table, tabourette and book ends. Ornamented with rich cut out design. Seats upholstered in imitation Spanish brown leather well padded and strong. Most comfortable, lasting and beautiful. Large arm chair and large rocker stand 38 in. high over all, and 25½ in. wide; seats 19½x18 in. Arms of quarter-sawed oak. Smaller rocker and chair have seat 17x16 in. Table 24x36 in. Tabourette 17 in. high, has octagon shaped top 12in. wide. Book ends just the right size to easily support large books. Each piece full size. Set will furnish sitting room, parlor or library. The greatest furniture offer ever made. Shipped from our Chicago warehouse or factory in western New York State. Shipping wt., carefully crated, about 200 lbs.

Order by No. 110AMA9. Price $24.65. Send only $1.00 now. Balance $2.50 monthly.

IMPORTANT

NOTE: This great set comes with chairs ready to put into your room and sectional table which you set up in five minutes. Don't compare this with the so-called "knock-down" sets which come in 65 or 70 pieces to put together. No carpenter work for you to do on this Hartman set—no chance of getting shaky furniture because this set has the solid glue-block constructios. See if anyone else will guarantee to send you such a set as this at anywhere near our price. We will not sell "knock-down" furniture and ask you to do a lot of work on it. Get this set that's complete—ready to use—solid, reliable.

Baby Carriage

Ivory or Gray Finish

Send Only $1.00 Now

An unbeatable bargain at our low price. Made of round fibre reed woven over wire stakes making a very strong and durable body. Inside measurements 13 in. wide, length of bed (back up) 24 in., back down, 33 in. Princess cloth upholstering. Windshield matches upholstering. Black enamel, ¾ in. gears with full pushers. Hood 19½ in. wide; 25 in. deep. Foot brake works easily and securely locks carriage. Automobile springs—very resilient and easy riding. 12 in. wheels; ¼ in. rubber tires. Shipping wgt. about 65 lbs.

Order Ivory Finish by No. 337AMA16. Price $24.65. Send only $1 now, balance $2.50 per month.

Order Gray Finish by No. 337AMA17. Price $24.95. Send only $1 now, balance $2.50 per month.

Send Only $1 Now

Satin Walnut Kitchen Cabinet

Send for this fine Kitchen Cabinet and use it 30 days at our risk. Then if you decide not to keep it, send it back. We will pay charges both ways. If you keep it, pay a little every month. Built of satin walnut with beautiful brown effect. Wood knobs and handles. Large china cupboard with grilled wood doors, which have crystal glass panels. 3 utility drawers. Large sliding sugar bin. Ample working space. Base top 22x42 in. Extensible bread board. 2 cutlery drawers. 2 sliding flour bins, each 50 lbs. capacity. Sturdy construction in every part. Made to last for years. Shipped from factory in Central Indiana. Shipping weight about 175 pounds.

Order by No. 475AMA7. Price $14.85. Send only $1.00 now. Balance $1.50 monthly.

$1.00 BRINGS YOUR CHOICE

White Enameled Lined — Lift Lid Refrigerator

Send Only $1.00 Now

Made with inside case of odorless, tasteless lumber, matched and clamped together, well nailed and glued, and fastened to hardwood cleats, making it a thoroughly air-tight, strong cabinet in itself. Clean and absolutely sanitary. Outside case, genuine ash nailed and glued to cleats which bind the inside case, making it one of strongest and most durable refrigerators ever built. Waste pipe conducts ice melting outside of refrigerator. Trap covering waste pipe prevents cold air inside from escaping. Perfect circulation of air passing over ice, flues directly into provision compartment forcing the warmer up flues at either end thus keeping up constant circulation. Two heavily woven steel wire shelves. Large lower compartment. White enamel lined. Finished with good quality filler and water-proof varnish, giving it a handsome gloss finish. Equipped with solid brass, nickle plated trimmings. Refrigerator has strong ice rack made of galvanized steel bars welded together. Order by No. 339AMA36. Size 23¾ in. wide; 15½ in. deep; 42 in. high. 50 lbs. ice capacity. Price $19.75. Pay only $1.00 now. Balance $2.00 monthly.

51-Piece Dinner Set

Pattern derived from the heavy gold treatment of King George period. Rich in appearance. Materials are very durable, highly glazed and fired; decoration being placed on each piece before the final glazing is executed. Correct number of pieces to constitute a complete service for 6 persons. There are 51 pieces in all, consisting of 6—9¾-in. Dinner Plates, 6—7¼ in. Pie Plates, 6—8¼-in. Soup Plates, 6 Cups, 6 Saucers, 6 Individual Butters, 1—10½-in. Meat Platter, 1—12½-in. Meat Platter, 1 Sugar Bowl and cover (2 pieces) 1 Creamer, 1—7¼-in. Salad Bowl, 1—8½-in. Round Vegetable Dish, 1—8-in. Oval Vegetable Dish, 1—9¾-in. Round Fruit Bowl.

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